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HOT DEMOCRAT OF THE MONTH: MIKE DUKAKIS • THE EDITORS: A CURE FOR LAROUCHIES

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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An Economic Detective Story

THE DEBT HOAX

Third world countries owe billions to the West. Third world oligarchs like Marcos have stashed billions in the West. American banks make huge profits both ways. Hmmm…

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NEWSPAPER

by James S. Henry

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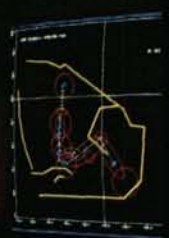

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE CONTRA-VERSY

To the editors:

THE NEW REPUBLIC's "The Case for the Contras" (March 24) is a perfect example of how faulty analysis induced and compounded by moral arrogance results in wrongheaded policy prescriptions. The most depressing aspect of this muddle is its familiarity: once again, we are being served an amazingly angelic view of our own side, an entirely scary one of "the enemy," and a cheerfully unrealistic assessment of what the proposed course would achieve.

A reader of TNR's editorial would never know that the overthrow of Somoza was the result of popular revolution (like the fall of Marcos), not of a sinister Soviet intervention or Cuban coup. Subsequent Sandinista repression and curtailment of human rights are undeniable; discontent with many of the regime's policies is well documented. But the editorial grossly exaggerates both the amount of popular hostility toward the regime and the enthusiasm of the discontented for the *contras*. As a result, any resemblance between American support for them and support for the Afghan resistance (or the president's belated endorsement of the democratic tidal wave in the Philippines) is fake.

One need not have illusions about the Sandinistas to deem the American attempt at overthrowing their regime politically and morally objectionable (any more than one needed to have illusions about Hanoi to condemn America's war in Vietnam). In order to justify aid to the *contras*, the editorial is obliged, on he one hand, to resort to the hoariest of scare tactics—a new version of the tired domino theory—and on the other hand, to present the *contras* in the most idyllic light. What is utterly lacking in TNR's argument is a consideration of the likely effects of the policy prescribed: at best, the installation under American auspices of a regime as brutal as that which the overthrow of Arbenz imposed on the Guatemalans, at worst, the misery of a protracted civil war in which we will once again help destroy villages and lives in order to save them.

There is a world of difference between an American policy that aims at using a combination of carrots and sticks (short of the resort to force) in order to make "friendly," often dependent regimes cease their violations of human rights before these regimes perish and an American policy that aims at overthrowing by force a regime whose nature or orientation we do not approve of. If we want to promote human rights and make a pluralist democracy possible in Nicaragua, a CIA-sponsored invasion is surely not the way of inducing the Sandinistas to reform their rule. The Sandinistas' neighbors may not like the regime in Managua, but not one of them has endorsed the policy TNR advocates. To the rest of the world this policy appears to be an imperialistic attempt at destroying a regime, not because it exports subversion (the Contadora process offers ways of coping with this, through negotiation), not because it provides military bases to the Soviets (it doesn't), not because it is undemocratic (compared to Somoza?), but because it is ideologically anti-American and socially revolutionary. In other words, such a course can only make America look like the mirror image of the Soviet Union.

Why is "preventing the establishment of a Leninist dictatorship in Nicaragua" a worthy goal for the U.S.? Because it is Leninist? Why, then, aren't we fighting in places where there isn't a shred of popular support for it, such as Poland? Because it harms American interests? But are we committed to the overthrow of every regime that does, in whatever way, adversely affect those interests—cosmically defined? Or is it because we are determined to establish democracy everywhere, by any means—a task that far exceeds our abilities, to which nobody has appointed us, and one that becomes fatuous in areas where there simply aren't enough democrats to put in power, or where democrats forcibly put in power by us would look like puppets?

TNR's editorialists might have meditated about what happened to us in Indochina not so long ago, or about past American interventions in Nicaragua, before they repudiated the journal's distinguished past.

STANLEY HOFFMANN
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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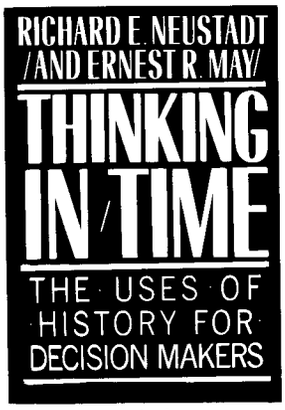

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To the editors:

In your unseemly haste to embrace President Reagan's policy on the *contras*, you have fallen into an error that you once recognized and denounced. In 1982 several members of Congress urged that the U.S. negotiate with the Salvadoran guerrilla movement, in part because several members of the guerrilla's political front group, the FDR, had impeccable democratic credentials. Distinguished democrats there are in the FDR, but the real power in the movement was held by the military leaders, the FMLN, whose ideologies range approximately from Stalin's to Pol Pot's. Today in Nicaragua such democrats as Arturo Cruz do populate the UNO, the *contras'* political front group. However, it is the military leaders that matter, and these leaders are overwhelmingly antidemocratic Somocistas. If the *contras* succeed in overthrowing the Sandinistas, the democrats in the UNO will be shunted aside by dictatorial thugs, just as they were when the Sandinistas took power. Supporting the *contras* may have something to do with the geopolitical balance between the U.S. and the USSR, but it has nothing to do with supporting democracy.

W. HARDY CALLCOTT
Stanford Law School
Stanford, California

To the editors:

TNR's analysis of the *contra* aid issue is thus far the most realistic appraisal of the crisis in Nicaragua. It successfully bridges the gap between Patrick J. Buchanan's assertions that a recalcitrant Congress is "co-guarantor with Moscow" in establishing a totalitarian state in Nicaragua and the neo-isolationist selective perception of the American bishops.

The Sandinistas have established an unpopular and all-pervasive totalitarian regime in Managua. Moreover, once established, they don't disappear by accident. One need only ask the Afghans or the millions of Eastern Europeans living under Soviet-enforced tyranny to verify that assertion.

The plethora of responses offered by critics of aid for the *contras* are either irrelevant or sadly misinformed. For example, those who link the *contras* with the Somocistas somehow fail to recognize those same links between ex-supporters of Somoza and the local-level Sandinista Revolutionary Committees. Arguments that support for the *contras* will only drive the Sandinistas further into the arms of the Soviets are even more inane. The sad history of American avoidance of the Cubans, in the faint hope that Castro would back away from his Soviet masters, should be lesson enough: Was there ever any doubt as to Castro's ideological preferences?

Finally, the arguments that the *contras* cannot win, or that support for them would only draw the United States further into the conflict, can be dispelled by looking at the legislative history of aid for the *contras*. In 1983, as the House of Representatives began a series of aid rejections, George Will stated that the surest way to draw the U.S. directly into the Nicaraguan conflict was to begin a halfhearted policy toward the resolution of the crisis. That prophecy now seems self-fulfilling. As the stage seems set for yet another stopgap compromise between the White House and Congress, with its attendant pledges for diplomacy with the Sandinistas, one need only remind Vietnam revisionists that the true failure of U.S. policy in that period was the lack of any clearly defined policy in the first place.

DANIEL W. GENTGES
Syracuse University College of Law
Syracuse, New York

To the editors:

We disagree with THE NEW REPUBLIC's editorial unconditionally endorsing President Reagan's policy of military aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*.

This disagreement is not rooted in isolationism, defeatism, willful blindness, or a double standard of "scrupulousness" about the sovereignty of "states ruled by pro-Soviet Leninists"—the only motives the editorial permits to opponents of *contra* aid. Nor is our view rooted in any illusion that left-wing dictatorships are somehow morally superior to right-wing ones. Rather, it stems from a judgment that the means the administration proposes—themselves morally dubious—cannot accomplish the ends it envisions.

TNR brushes aside the large body of evidence, from both official and unofficial sources, that even with massive American aid the *contra* army will be militarily and politically unable to achieve the goal of overthrowing the Sandinista regime and replacing it with a liberal democratic government on the Costa Rican model.

For all practical purposes, the leadership of the *contras* continues to be dominated by antidemocratic supporters of the former Somoza regime. The great majority of their military commanders are former National Guardsmen. Their record of human rights violations has been amply documented by such independent investigators as Amnesty International and Americas Watch.

We do not question the democratic credentials of Arturo Cruz—or, for that matter, of Rubén Zamora, who occupies a position in the political arm of the Salvadoran guerrilla movement analogous to that of Cruz in the Nicaraguan one. But as THE NEW REPUBLIC has repeatedly pointed out with reference to El Salvador, at the moment of guerrilla triumph the democrats who adorn the letterheads will be pushed aside by the thugs who control the guns.

It may be that none of the imaginable American policies toward Nicaragua could succeed in imposing a pluralist democratic system upon that country—including the policy we favor, which would combine political and economic pressure, negotiations, and aid and encouragement to democracies in the region. We do think, however, that our policy would stand a far better chance than the one recommended by Reagan and TNR of achieving the second U.S. goal: preventing Nicaragua from becoming a heavily armed, aggressive Soviet military surrogate on the American continent.

Managua long ago agreed to the outlines of a settlement that would, among other things, prohibit foreign military bases and advisers, institute negotiations aimed at reducing regional armaments levels, and create joint mechanisms to prevent and resolve border disputes. Such a deal can almost certainly still be struck. It would forestall the strategic disaster TNR fears. And because its terms would be easily verifiable, it would not have to rely on trust.

Some time ago, in a lead editorial ("Sticks and Sticking Points," August 15 & 22, 1983), THE NEW REPUBLIC endorsed the relatively mild step of symbolic American naval maneuvers in Central American waters. The magazine then added in conclusion:

"If, however, the Administration has really no intention of negotiating with Nicaragua, but is preparing for a general Central American war, which will inevitably involve American boys, then we have a right to know now. In that case we would be forced to join the opposition to the Administration, and oppose all U.S. military activities in the area, as the lesser of two evils.

"When a government takes steps as decisive and potentially dangerous as those taken by President Reagan, the country deserves to be informed of the

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

BAN THE BOND

The municipal bond market took one look at Senator Bob Packwood's version of tax reform, gasped, reeled, and collapsed. Two sentences in the 250-page document proposed to make all municipal bond interest subject to the so-called "alternative minimum tax." The Senate Finance Committee took the reaction to mean that their chairman had erred, and hastily voted, 19 to zero (Packwood included), that he didn't really mean it. I took the market's tizzy last month as dramatic evidence of who really benefits from municipal bonds. After all, the alternative minimum tax affects only high-income people with lots of loopholes. Most municipal bondholders (that's right, most) have incomes over $280,000 a year and average holdings of half a million dollars—in municipal bonds alone.

Some scandals are protected by secrecy, but some are protected far better by a thick wall of complexity and tedium. Just about the only people who trouble to penetrate the mysteries of municipal bonds are those who profit from them. The trade association of municipal bond investment banks is spending more than a million dollars a year fighting against tax reform. It has hired a four-star list of Democratic and Republican influence-peddlers. This is extraordinarily selfless if, as the industry's propaganda suggests, the sole beneficiaries of current arrangements are poor people and struggling local governments.

The point of municipal bonds is to save money for local governments because tax-exempt bonds can be sold at a lower interest rate. Of course, the federal government loses tax revenues, and common sense says that people will buy the bonds only if they save more in taxes than they give up in lower interest rates. And in fact, studies confirm the obvious. According to President Reagan's tax-reform plan of last May, "The revenue loss to the Federal government is approximately 33-50 percent higher than the benefits received by the borrower."

This would be idiotic enough. But a couple of decades ago clever lawyers and bankers started inventing ways for local governments to act essentially as "fronts" for private borrowing. First came "industrial revenue bonds," used to supply tax-exempt financing for factory and commercial construction. Cities and states use IRBs in attempts to steal business from one another—a perfectly futile zero-sum game financed by the feds. There soon followed tax-free bonds to finance rental apartments, single-family homes, student loans, and a variety of other amiable endeavors.

As a result of these creative new techniques, the issuance of new municipal bonds has exploded from $14 billion in 1971 to $198 billion last year. The congressional Joint Tax Committee figures that tax-free bonds are costing the federal treasury over $27 billion a year. Only $12 billion of that is for traditional "public purpose" bonds to finance such things as roads and sewers. The rest is for "private purpose" bonds of the sort invented in recent years.

A typical absurdity is the so-called "mortgage revenue bond," invented in the late 1970s. The city or state floats a tax-free bond and uses the money to supply low-interest mortgages for home buyers. A 1983 General Accounting Office study concluded that the average beneficiary got a subsidy worth $3,400, at a cost to the federal government of $13,300. In total, during the previous two years, the federal government had lost $2.6 billion in revenue while supplying only $600 million in credit subsidies to home buyers. And over half these home buyers had above-average incomes. In the case of rental-housing bonds, the main beneficiaries are rich real estate developers.

Floating municipal bonds is a lucrative business: about three percent of the take, or six billion dollars last year. It would be illegal, of course, to simply bribe city officials for this business. But it is not illegal to hire them. (Remember TRB's law of scandal: the scandal isn't what's illegal, it's what's legal.) Former New York City Council president Carol Bellamy is now a vice president at Morgan Stanley. A lifelong pol, what could she

continued on page 41

"With my heart I am not a German and never will be!"

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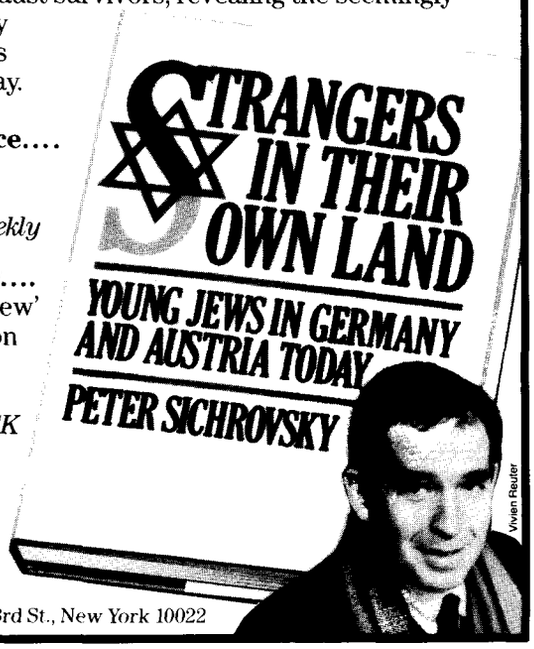

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
APRIL 14, 1986

DEMOCRACY'S RUSTY WEAPON

At first everyone thought it was a joke. But it wasn't. In the March 18 Illinois primary, two zombified followers of right-wing extremist Lyndon LaRouche actually won the Democratic nominations for secretary of state and lieutenant governor. Janice Hart and Mark Fairchild won on the platform articulated in their cult's *New Solidarity* newspaper: eliminate Gramm-Rudman, fund Star Wars, test everyone for AIDS (and quarantine victims), and form a "Nuremberg Tribunal" to investigate drug dealing by Zionists and journalists, represented by Henry Kissinger and Katharine Graham, whom the LaRouchies want to hang for treason.

Although Hart and Fairchild articulated their sick program to anyone who would listen, most of those who voted for them had no idea what they stood for. In downstate Illinois, many voters cast their ballots in favor of last names with an Anglo-Saxon ring, and against the "foreign-sounding" ones of their opponents: George Sangmeister and Aurelia Pucinski. In Chicago many wanted to protest gubernatorial nominee Adlai Stevenson III's decision not to choose a woman as his running mate. Whatever their rationales, few meant to support the cranks who babble at the airport about feeding Jane Fonda to the whales. Not many of the more than 300,000 voters who cast ballots for Fairchild and Hart believe that the Queen of England pushes heroin.

Recriminations are flying in Illinois, and there is plenty of blame to go around. Stevenson, who time and again has proved to be a hopelessly inept campaigner, exerted little effort on behalf of his slate. Pucinski and Sangmeister staged lackluster efforts, running as if they were unopposed in the primary. Mayor Harold Washington and Cook County Democratic chairman Ed Vrdolyak both failed to turn out wards under their control for Stevenson's candidates. And the news media failed to grasp the weird ideology of the LaRouchies or warn voters about their strength.

But those who ought to be most ashamed are the majority of Illinois residents who neglected to take their democratic responsibility seriously. In the Philippines courageous citizens braved tanks and gunfire to exercise their right to select a leader. In Illinois 79 percent of the electorate didn't bother to vote at all, and most of the rest had no idea whom they were voting for. If more people had voted, and if those who did vote had based their decisions on more than position on the ballot or the sound of a name, the LaRouchies wouldn't have won.

Apathy about exercising the fundamental right of citizenship is not restricted to primary elections or to Illinois voters. In the 1984 presidential election, 53 percent of those eligible voted. About 38 percent vote in off-year congressional elections, and a substantially smaller number cast ballots in state and local contests, as well as in primaries of all kinds. Recent evidence suggests that the decline in voting may have leveled off. But according to the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, current voting levels in the United States are lower than in any industrial democracy in the world except Switzerland. In Belgium, Sweden, Germany, and France, more than 85 percent of all citizens go to the polls regularly on election day.

Many Americans don't vote because of onerous voter-registration procedures. In the 1800s voting was as popular in the United States as it is in European countries today. Around the turn of the century, voter registration was instituted as a way to curb electoral fraud. It did reduce fraud, but it also reduced voting. Statistics show that most people vote once they are registered: 87 percent of registered voters go to the polls regularly in the U.S.

Almost every other country in the world has some form of automatic voter registration. In America many states have lengthy residency requirements and long closing periods for registration before election day. A few states still have dual registration—separate procedures for voting in county and municipal elections. Several states are quick to purge people from the rolls if they skip an election or two. One-sixth of the U.S. population moves every year, and people who change their homes usually don't reregister for years. That's why Southern states with the lengthiest residency requirements and longest closing dates before elec-

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DEATH OF THE PARTY

IN THE Philippines everybody votes, but the ballots don't get counted. In the United States every ballot is counted, but nobody votes.

The other day in Illinois two members of Lyndon LaRouche's Green Slime Faction won the nominations for lieutenant governor and secretary of state in a routinely low-turnout Democratic primary. A stunned Adlai Stevenson III, the handy winner of the gubernatorial nomination, went into the political equivalent of anaphylactic shock. First he swelled up to grotesque proportions, and then he exploded. This was one bit of vox populi that Adlai wasn't about to accept as the inviolate voice of Democracy. He wouldn't run on the same slate with these anti-Semitic, fascist-minded, thugistical types, as he characterized them, and in truth the Lyndon LaRouche folks are so far to the right that even Pat Buchanan meets them only in an out-of-the-way McDonald's in suburban Rockville, Maryland.

Former senator Stevenson is insisting that the LaRouchians are wholly outside the principles of the Democratic Party. But what this primary showed was that, as a mass-based, political organization binding together like-minded citizens, the Democratic Party doesn't exist. As a real organization, with dues-paying members, rites of initiation, oaths, standards of admission, regular meetings, or other meaningful activities, be they newsletters or summer picnics, the Democratic Party is barely a memory—even in Illinois! The modern American political party has devolved into a legal shell used by a few thousand elected officeholders, along with a small assortment of businessmen, lawyers, and other hermit-crab types who find the statutory privileges conferred on a duly recognized party a convenience in their work of manipulating government. This time, however, a couple of monsters from the deep got into the shell while the hermit-crab regulars weren't paying attention.

Since the 19th-century heyday of Republican Mugwumpery, the better elements in our society have dedicated themselves to the work of destruction of political parties. In 1884, in a remark typical of the time, Mark Twain said of the evil effects of partisan loyalties: "I am persuaded that the idea of consistency—unchanging allegiance to party—has lowered the manhood of the whole nation—pulled it down and dragged it in the mud."

In the Blaine-Cleveland election of 1884, the good-government crowd, the goo-goos, pushed civil service legislation as a means of weakening party power by taking away patronage. But by the early 1900s, they also sought to take away from the two parties the right of naming their own candidates. Party-controlled caucuses and conventions were to be replaced by the direct primary, open to any registered voter whether or not he'd ever attended a party meeting.

BOSS and party leaders foresaw that the open primary would transfer the nominating process from workers and others bound to an organization and a specific political subculture to a broad undifferentiated mass of persons more susceptible to influence by modern mass media than by them.

Thus in Illinois they fought to the last hour the introduction of the primary. "The Blond Boss," Chicago Republican William Lorimer, and Uncle Joe Cannon, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, and other members of the old guard set up their headquarters in Springfield's Leland Hotel to personally supervise the battle in the state Legislature. The fight ended on January 29, 1908, when the primary bill was passed, after which the Blond Boss's underlings in the State Assembly published a prophetic remonstrance in the House journal: "WE PROTEST, Against the passage of a law that . . . will absolutely destroy this great [Republican] party . . . and, in the end, destroy all parties, placing the power of government in the hands of independent and minority voters. . . . It makes the individual—the personality of some candidate—the party platform, in place of principles. It deprives the citizen of his voice and influence in political affairs."

They lost, and the "trust press," to use Lorimer's language, gained a decisive influence in candidate selection. Even before the primary law was passed, Lorimer complained that "no man could secure a nomination for any office . . . unless he had first climbed the steps of the *Tribune* office and begged its editor . . . for permission to become a candidate." What these two sagacious political operatives could not imagine was a party system so degraded and unimportant that the trust press would ignore the very primary elections it had once worked so hard to secure.

Once upon a time, highly partisan newspapers did labor to ensure the nomination of people they wanted in the primaries. Today's nonpartisan media are content to hew to a neutral line, confident that, in the lesser offices at least, both parties nominate the same basically acceptable types. Indeed, reporters and editors look with contempt on office-seekers who, bereft of any possibility of a political organization to sustain them, hang around scheming to get a little publicity.

The half of the potential electorate that bothers to vote at all follows the same cues. Steeped in the goo-goo tradition that anything smacking of "politics" or "partisanship" is ipso facto immoral, they have been brought up to think as Mark Twain did. It's not the kind of training to get people to vote in a primary, especially in an era when both political parties are abstractions with which they never have face-to-face contact. So great is the lack of interest in partisan affairs that the *New York Times* last week referred to the small numbers who did vote as "activists."

Hence the surprising aspect of the Illinois primary results is that more nut cakes didn't win. Any fluke, from the luck of an odd name to rainy weather on election day, can be decisive in picking a party's candidates. In this instance the remnants of the Democratic political machine were too weak and too distracted to support its own candidate for lieutenant governor and secretary of state. The defeated party endorsed candidates who themselves were either too poor or too complacent to buy the media attention they needed to assure their winning. Putting aspirants for lesser office on camera does nothing for viewer ratings, so the media couldn't be bothered pointing out which of the candidates belonged in office and which in the funny farm.

Faute de mieux, Green Slime oozed in.

NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

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"The People & The Press," Ad #5 in a series

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tion day have the lowest turnouts, according to Raymond Wolfinger and Steven Rosenstone in *Who Votes?* Four states with election-day registration, and North Dakota (which has no registration requirement), have turnouts between nine and 18 percentage points higher than the national average. *Who Votes?* estimates that voting would increase by nine percent if registration requirements were liberalized significantly.

Most U.S. citizens would consider automatic registration an invasion of privacy. Our government doesn't keep a list of its citizens, and there is a healthy aversion in America to having the government keep track of where we are. And penalties for not voting, which exist in many countries, including Italy and Australia, are a dubious way to enforce civic virtue. But there are other ways to simplify voter registration.

Throughout the 1970s, bills for a national system of postcard registration foundered in Congress. President Carter made the last major push for same-day registration in his 1977 electoral reform package. The bill was killed by a coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats, who argued that Carter's plan would increase fraud and benefit Democrats more than Republicans. Neither of these arguments is supported by evidence. Election fraud has always been protean in nature. Where ingrained, it adapts to whatever methods are used to counter it. And states that have loosened their registration rules have not experienced an increased level of fraud. Chicago and Philadelphia, not unlike the Philippines, need careful watchers whatever their electoral strictures. Minneapolis can be trusted. Wolfinger and Rosenstone found the charge that wider voting would help Democrats more than Republicans similarly unsubstantiated.

There's a beautifully simple way to make sure that voters don't exercise their franchise more than once in each election (the ostensible problem with proposals for election-day voter registration). They developed it in Costa Rica where, as a result, voter fraud is virtually unknown. After voting, the citizen dips his or her thumb in indelible ink, which takes a couple of days to wear off. Some have proposed a high-tech variant on this idea involving invisible ink and infrared lights at the voting place. But we prefer the Costa Rican system. Not only is it simpler and cheaper, but it also would address the real problem, which is getting people to take voting seriously. A blue thumb on election day would become a badge of pride—a sign that its owner had participated in the key civic sacrament of democracy.

NOTEBOOK

□ SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE IS SAUCE FOR THE TURKEY: Secretary of State Shultz, in Turkey for what he thought was going to be "a nice lunch" and an agreement to renew American military bases there, got "sandbagged" (his words) with the demand that the base renewal be linked to wider American markets for Turkish textiles. Well, now. For years there have been rumblings (in these pages, among other places) that America's defense of Japan ought to be linked somehow to an end of restrictive trade practices by the Japanese. So we find a certain justice in Turkey's demand. After all, what keeps Turkish textiles out of the United States isn't a matter of obscure regulations and business customs (America's complaint against Japan), but an outright quota under the preposterous Multi-Fiber Agreement. In Turkey, as in so many poor countries, the United States wants to nurture capitalism and democracy, but pursues trade policies that make the development of a stable middle class more difficult.

□ CLARE DE LUNE: In President Reagan's television speech promoting *contra* aid on March 16, he recounted a favorite anecdote of his friend Clare Boothe Luce, the 83-year-old widow of Henry Luce, who moved to Washington a few years ago and set herself up, in an apartment at the Watergate, as the dowager empress of American conservatism. Reagan described Mrs. Luce instructing President Kennedy, over lunch, that presidents ultimately rate no more than one sentence in the history books, and "Your sentence will be that you stopped the Communists—or that you did not." Reagan left out the follow-up. According to the man who arranged the lunch, Kennedy was so bored and repelled by Mrs. Luce's imperious lecture that he brought the lunch to an abrupt end after only half an hour.

□ ROBERT PINSKY'S POEM "The Uncreation," appears on page 38 of this issue. This break from our tradition of not publishing works by our own poetry editor marks the conclusion of Pinsky's seven-year tenure in that job.

POSTCARD COSTA RICA

MIAMI SOUTH

"I CAME TO Costa Rica because everyone knows you can get away with anything here," Rafael Caro said shortly before his arrest a year ago. He was very nearly right. Caro was chief of the Guadalajara drug ring known as La Familia and said to control 60 percent of Mexico's cocaine traffic. Early in 1985 Caro and a small group of friends landed their private plane at Costa Rica's largest airport and passed through customs carrying no identification. They rented five luxury cars and bought four mansions (one of them featuring two swimming pools), a care-

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taker's house, and a coffee plantation. With the men was a 17-year-old Mexican girl, Sarah Cosio, who later claimed that Caro had kidnapped her—for the second time. Cosio, neighbors said, often drove into San José in the red Ferrari Caro gave her.

It is likely that if Caro had not been wanted by the American Drug Enforcement Agency in connection with the murder of a DEA agent named Enrique Camerena, he could have gone on enjoying life in Costa Rica for years. "It certainly wasn't a Costa Rican investigation that uncovered his whereabouts," says one foreign official connected with the case. Shortly after Caro's deportation, Costa Rican officials suspended the head of airport security. A few weeks later, the same man turned up at the airport again, this time as chief of immigration. The justice minister reports that an investigation is pending.

The case of Rafael Caro is not unusual. Over the past few decades, Costa Rica has acquired a reputation as Miami South: a resort for international criminals, especially gringos, and a one-stop shopping center for anything from a few grams of coke to a tank. The reason is its love affair with capitalism—the same worship of pluralism, enterprise, and good living that has made Costa Rica the most developed, peaceful, and stable country in Central America. It is a Third World country with the luxury of a middle-class mentality—leave me alone so I can get rich. Ticos, as Costa Ricans call themselves, roller-skate in the park wearing Walkmans, watch HBO on cable TV, eat at salad bars, and buy Scandinavian-design bedroom sets.

One happy result of the Tico way of thinking is the electoral system. An American voter would feel quite at home here. A new president takes office every four years, and incumbent parties have trouble keeping power. The two leading parties, Unidad and Liberación, resemble the Republican and Democratic parties respectively. At the moment Liberación is torn by debates over whether the state or the private sector can better respond to social problems in an age of tight budgets. (Liberación still won the elections this February 2.) Campaign rhetoric, though, is more colorful here. Workers for Unidad candidate Rafael Calderon distributed a pamphlet describing Oscar Arias, Liberación's candidate, as "vain, self-centered, conceited, arrogant, disdainful, and boastful in front of those who do not have the money or education he enjoyed. . . . he reminds you of your classmates who always came to school in a beautiful car, wearing imported clothes and expensive high-heeled shoes." I asked Calderon about the literature, expecting the usual American response of "unauthorized low-level gnomes." "It's all true," he said, smiling.

WEEKS after leading a successful military coup in 1948, President José Figueres Ferrer abolished Costa Rica's army. Since then it has settled for an 8,000-man police force that only recently began toting pistols. (The force had carried nothing more dangerous than screwdrivers—for removing the license plates of illegally parked cars.) No military meant no military coups against Figueres, but it was also in character with the Costa Rican history of free education and no capital punishment. This peaceful tradition also allows Costa Rica to maintain its middle-class life-style—30 percent of the national budget goes to education—and to avoid anything as unpleasant as a war. A poll last July showed that 80 percent of Ticos thought the Sandinistas were a major threat to their way of life. At the same time, 74 percent favored maintaining unarmed neutrality. Americans here say that Costa Ricans are ready to defend their country—down to the last gringo.

TO TICOS, the U.S. is more than a source of defense and ideological inspiration. It is money. Costa Ricans live in relative luxury, despite a $4.5 billion foreign debt, because the U.S. is giving Costa Rica as much per capita as the USSR gives Cuba—more than it gives any country except Israel. In addition, Americans here are big-business types. After describing beaches and volcanoes, Costa Rican tourist brochures have a section headlined, "Why not retire and live in this country?" Jeffrey Martin, president of the Pensionados and Rentistas Association, says: "Foreigners are now the largest source of dollars entering Costa Rica—more than the leading exports of coffee and bananas combined." Martin, a 37-year-old Oklahoman, is wearing snakeskin cowboy boots and a gold chain. He says he made his fortune in the check-authorization business, retired at 35, and brought his family here. "I have a $225,000 house here that would be $600,000 or $800,000 worth of house in the States," he says. "I never had a maid before; now we have two maids and two gardeners." He pays the help the combined salary of $300 a month. Martin doesn't need to speak much Spanish. The American community in San José is like a self-enclosed Midwestern town. The community theater puts on old-fashioned musicals. The English-language newspaper covers not only Costa Rican news but a resident's problems bringing her pet bird into the U.S.

Costa Ricans claim that the Casablanca-like atmosphere of San José is due to a policy of open immigration and a police force that the ministers of justice and public security call "inadequate." Officials said they would have granted asylum to the shah of Iran, Fidel Castro, or Anastasio Somoza, who invaded Costa Rica twice (he was repelled both times by Costa Rican volunteers).

Still, although U.S. consular officials say they are happy with Costa Rica's cooperation today, between 1971 and 1978 there was not a single extradition to the United States. The most famous beneficiary of this policy was Robert Vesco, the financier and Nixon pal who came to Costa Rica in 1971 and befriended then-president Figueres, evidently to their mutual benefit. The joke here is that Figueres made Vesco a millionaire—but that before Vesco came to Costa Rica, he was a multimillionaire. When opposition candidate Rodrigo Carazo won the presidency in 1978, threatening to deport Vesco on inauguration day, Vesco skipped town. He now reportedly lives in Cuba.

Most international visitors are less exotic. "If you want to get an immigrant visa and you have a record that

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stretches from Maine to Florida," says one Western observer, "all you have to do is tell the Costa Ricans you've lived your whole life in Antelope Wells, New Mexico. They write to the sheriff there, who will tell them that, as far as he knows, you're a real nice person with no police record. That's the way most American fugitives get residency."

Every six months or so, the U.S. State Department interdicts a truck full of bullets or guns that officials say proves the Sandinistas are aiding leftist guerrillas in El Salvador. For the past few years, many of the shipments uncovered have originated not in Managua but in San José, perhaps evidence of the exportation of capitalism as much as communism. "We have more than 100 places where airplanes can land, and only 25 or 30 have some sort of protection by the authorities," says Juan José Echeverria, minister of public security in the Carazo administration. "We are a non-repressive peaceful country where anyone can come in as long as they don't create problems and no one will bother them. We have good roads and usually no roadblocks. We have a not very efficient secret police. We are a wonderful place for smuggling."

Echeverria should know. Residents here say arms traffic began in earnest when he and other Carazo officials began openly supplying arms to the Sandinistas in 1978. Pilots and salesmen then realized what an easy and profitable business arms trade could be. And also free of burdensome government regulations: the legislature got around to outlawing ownership of automatic weapons only this January. When police arrested a group of anti-Sandinista *contras* operating in Costa Rica's north last April, the only weapons charge they could be booked on was possession of explosives. The machine guns were perfectly legal. "If there were a demand for diamonds and gold, Costa Rica would be used for that," says Echeverria. "Now it's weapons and coke. Whatever's in demand, someone will sell it here."

TINA ROSENBERG

Tina Rosenberg is a writer living in Nicaragua.

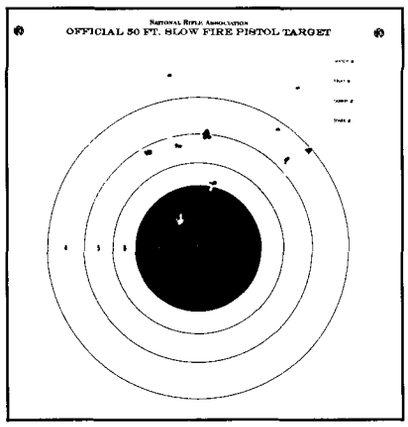
WASHINGTON SCENE

SHOTS IN THE BASEMENT

THE national image of gun owners is of obese guys in flannel shirts posed in front of their pickups. But in Washington, NRA members have a different image. They're known as slick, pin-striped lobbyists and unctuous promoters with PAC money to burn. Which is the real NRA? I knew that inside the group's granite bunker on Capitol Hill lay the answer to my question. Determined to find out, I called NRA spokesman John Aquilino, who invited me over for a shooting lesson.

The evening I stopped over at the NRA, Aquilino was wearing a blue pullover and Levis. He met me at the door and took me upstairs. There aren't any weapons hanging in his office—just a Phil Gramm poster, a few "I Am the NRA" ads, and an unframed photo of Aquilino, Reagan, and NRA lobbyist Tom Korologos. Everyone in the picture is smiling. Aquilino and 20 members of the Texas NRA had just given Reagan a rifle for his collection. The photo was taken in 1981, when the president was still recuperating from a bullet fired by John Hinckley.

Aquilino told me a little about the NRA's current legislative effort. He didn't mention the NRA's opposition to recently introduced legislation banning plastic guns (which reportedly can pass through airport security systems). But he did talk about a bill called the Volkmer-McClure Firearms Owners' Protection Act (aren't the firearms supposed to protect their owners?), which would emasculate the 1968 Gun Control Act. The bill, which has already passed the Senate, would ease restrictions on dealers' record-keeping and make it legal to transport guns across state lines regardless of local law. In arguing for the revision, Aquilino observed the NRA dichotomy between "law-abiding citizens" and "criminals." I've always objected to the distinction, since it's based on the fallacy that criminals are members of an immutable, hereditary class. NRA members seem overly sure that they're incapable of committing a crime of passion.



THE AUTHOR'S TARGET

Aquilino didn't spit tobacco juice on the carpet or tell me about any mighty fine huntin'. He did like guns a lot, though. He showed me pictures of some of his favorites in an illustrated history of artillery. Then he passed me some bullets and explained the basic rules of gun safety. Finally, he put a pistol in my hands. The gun I would fire was a Smith & Wesson .22 revolver, "a good gun for campers, fishermen," according to Aquilino. It's also known as a Saturday night special, which can be bought for about $250. Aquilino also showed me a more powerful, magazine-load .45. He complained that D.C. law defines a semiautomatic pistol like the one I was holding as a machine gun, since the clip holds ten rounds. I had been there ten minutes and was already breaking laws.

We took the elevator down to the basement. Only a few others were shooting when we walked in. The range, which doubles as a fallout shelter, is covered in radiation-green acoustic tiles that are pockmarked and flaking apart. Aquilino says the NRA plans to upgrade it soon, and hopes to get permission from the city to fire more powerful guns.

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Maybe some submachine guns, mortars, bazookas—that kind of thing. Then we put on headphones and Plexiglass goggles, which made us look like dangerous bugs. Aquilino set up the target, and I started stinging.

I was a little nervous at first, but soon relaxed and started hitting closer to the center of the target. (See my best effort opposite.) Once your hands stop shaking, serious Walter Mittyism sets in. Most people, I would hope, have good-guy fantasies when they shoot—chasing thieves or plugging terrorists. In my mind's eye, I was knocking over banks and taking hostages. I understood, at last, what the surrealist André Breton meant when he wrote that nothing is more satisfying than firing a gun at random into the audience. And given how easy the NRA is making it to buy a gun these days, I'm staying away from surrealist drama.

JACOB WEISBERG

Move over, Mario.

DUKAKIS RISING

POLITICS wasn't always so kind to Michael S. Dukakis. In his first term as governor of Massachusetts, he coped with a budget deficit by reneging on a promise not to raise taxes. A politician with the common touch might have glossed over the switch. But Dukakis, aloof and cerebral, given to a cool managerial style, couldn't carry it off. It was 1978, Proposition 13 had just been approved in California, and anti-tax fever was sweeping the country. He was rudely turned out of office. "I'd been beat, I was hurt, I'd blown it," he says. He taught at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government for several years, then ran for governor again in 1982. This time he affected a more easy-going manner, capitalized on scandals in incumbent Governor Ed King's regime to win the Democratic primary, and easily defeated a weak Republican candidate.

It looks as though 1986 will be even better for Dukakis. He is a strong favorite to win reelection this fall, so much so that Republicans have had great difficulty finding a candidate to challenge him. Other governors, in a *Newsweek* poll, rated him the best of the gubernatorial lot, far more effective than the flashier Mario Cuomo of New York or the more baldly ambitious Bruce Babbitt of Arizona. And in the last two months, Dukakis has blossomed into a national figure renowned for a welfare program that puts the hopelessly unemployed in solid jobs and a tax-enforcement effort that produces unforeseen revenues. Governors are more often than not ignored in national politics, but periodically they are in fashion. They're hot now, and Dukakis is the hottest governor of all.

It's no accident. The ideas behind his welfare and tax programs are conventional, but Dukakis, through skillful packaging, has sold the programs as innovative answers to joblessness and budget deficits. The welfare scheme, known as Employment & Training Choices, or E.T., consists of intensive job counseling, followed by placement in jobs paying an average of $10,000 a year. That's well above minimum wage, and state day care, transportation, and health benefits are maintained for up to a year. Dukakis credits E.T. with slashing the welfare rolls. On taxes, he has toughened enforcement. But what has captured most attention is the tax amnesty that Dukakis declared for three months in 1983 and 1984. It brought in $85.2 million, helping him wipe out a deficit without raising tax rates.

Dukakis isn't hiding his light under a bushel. He touts his programs relentlessly, while his staff courts journalists. Two Washington political correspondents who follow state government, David Broder of the *Washington Post* and Neil Pierce of *National Journal*, have written upbeat pieces about Dukakis. Broder is particularly influential, and his lengthy, front-page article on February 10 anointed Dukakis as a politician of national importance. The governor has appeared on morning TV shows ("Today" and "Good Morning America") and evening shows ("NBC Nightly News" and "MacNeil-Lehrer"). The Democratic Party's policy commission called a press conference in February to draw attention to E.T. as a "Democratic success story." It was well attended by reporters. Dukakis appeared with Democratic chairman Paul Kirk, who praised E.T. as "a creative, alternative approach." Afterward Dukakis flew off to South Carolina for another press appearance on E.T.

The blitz continued at the National Governors Association meeting in Washington in late February. Dukakis pitched a national tax amnesty based on his experience in Massachusetts. Governors were presented a soft-blue booklet in which Dukakis insisted a federal tax program "could reasonably raise $20 billion in recurring federal revenues." Better still, "if taxpayer compliance levels could be brought back to where they were 20 years ago, federal revenues would increase by $65 billion without imposing one additional dime of new taxes on the American taxpayer." For convenient reference, this sentence was underlined. Dukakis also showed up on the ABC and NBC news shows, had a session with reporters at *U.S. News & World Report*, and published a column on tax amnesty on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times*. Dukakis's media omnipresence prompted Majority Leader Robert Dole to declare that the Senate would take "a look" at a federal tax amnesty. Dole explained that he'd seen Dukakis plugging it on television.

THE governor's rise to prominence got unintended assists from Senator Edward Kennedy, CBS commentator Bill Moyers, and President Reagan. Kennedy's smothering presence had kept other Massachusetts pols, except House Speaker Tip O'Neill, from getting national visibility. But in December Kennedy announced that he won't run for president in 1988. "It certainly opened the door to a lot of people," says Dukakis. Weeks later, Moyers's TV special on the black family made welfare a big issue, and Reagan called for a study of the welfare system in his State

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of the Union address on February 4. Then came Reagan's press conference on February 10. He was asked by Walter Robinson of the *Boston Globe* why he wanted to cut federal money for E.T. while professing to support programs that get people off welfare. Reagan said that "what Governor Dukakis is doing in his state is what we did in California as part of our welfare reforms way back when I was governor there." Dukakis quickly responded. "That's not right," he told the *Globe.* The difference in the two approaches was "night and day." Dukakis said that he backs "training for real jobs with real wages," while Reagan as California governor made welfare recipients perform "make-work" jobs. By going one-on-one with Reagan, O'Neill later told aides, Dukakis instantly became a Democratic presidential contender.

DO a tax amnesty and E.T. really work? E.T. began in October 1983, and the Dukakis administration says 23,000 people have gotten employment through it, and off welfare. This has caused the welfare rolls to shrink 9.4 percent from January 1983 to July 1985. Of course something else has happened in Massachusetts during this period: an economic boom. Unemployment has dropped from 6.4 percent to 3.3 percent, the lowest in the nation, and Massachusetts now has a budget surplus. "Any kid in Massachusetts who wants a job can get a job," Dukakis boasts. "It's a nice situation." Yet he says the economy isn't responsible for the drop in welfare recipients. He doesn't have hard evidence, but he offers a comparison. In many other states without E.T., welfare rolls are growing as the economy improves. "That's exactly what happened to me in my first term," Dukakis says. "Unemployment dropped from 12 percent to five percent and the welfare rolls went up. I used to sit there scratching my head. I'd ask my people, 'How's this possible?' They couldn't give me an answer, except all the social causes." With welfare families decreasing now, the difference has to be E.T., he says.

In any case, the rolls aren't shrinking as dramatically as Dukakis advertises. In literature promoting E.T., his administration cites the 9.4 percent drop. But this is piddling compared to the 26 percent decline in welfare families that occurred between 1981 and 1983 (while Dukakis was out of office), largely because of tightening of welfare eligibility by the Reagan administration. Since 1983 the rolls have fallen by little more than one percent, according to federal figures compiled by columnist Warren Brookes. Thomas Glynn, the deputy welfare commissioner under Dukakis, doesn't dispute Brookes's numbers, but says they include some recipients who are getting small, court-ordered payments and who are not real welfare recipients. Glynn says January 1986 figures show that the rolls have dwindled four percent since E.T. began. But Dukakis and his aides still use the dated and misleading 9.4 percent figure.

Inside the state welfare bureaucracy, E.T. has been criticized. Elizabeth Vorenberg, the assistant commissioner for research, planning, and evaluation, wrote a report last fall pointing out that some contractors got low wages for those they'd trained and that whites and men fared better in the program. Her report was controversial, and Glynn said it had to be "corrected" before it was published a month ago. Vorenberg quit her job, though Glynn says the welfare department would like to hire her again as a consultant.

TO HIS CREDIT, Dukakis does not claim that a tax amnesty alone will work. "Amnesty is a piece, and only a piece, of a longer, serious, on-going approach to this problem [of tax evasion]," he says. His program—the Revenue Enforcement and Protection Act of 1983, or REAP—combines "beefed-up statutory authority," more tax officials, "a highly visible, very tough enforcement effort right out of the box, well before amnesty," better treatment of taxpayers who don't evade, and amnesty. "It is crystal clear the day that amnesty window comes down, look out," says Dukakis. "No more Mr. Nice Guy." Still, amnesty was the eye-catcher, and Dukakis takes credit for it.

He shouldn't. Back in 1983 Dukakis was confronted with a deficit, and he was wary of boosting taxes again. An amnesty was considered. But Revenue Commissioner Ira Jackson says the Dukakis administration was fearful that the entire REAP would be defeated in the Legislature if amnesty were included. So it was left out. A state representative, Robert Ambler of Weymouth, revived the idea in a meeting with Dukakis and his aides. "There are legitimate people out there who aren't tax cheats who will pay but don't want a penalty," he said. Jackson jumped at the suggestion, says Ambler, but Dukakis was apprehensive, suggesting that an amnesty would be a bad signal to send to honest citizens who had paid on time. Dukakis later acceded, and now he brags that "no honest taxpayer has come up to me and said, 'Gee, that amnesty was bad.'" Dukakis doesn't mention Ambler. "You'd think he'd want to give a little credit," the representative grouses.

Politicians playing before a national audience don't often share credit. They claim it. Dukakis may not be running for president, but he's going about his business as if he were. Cuomo informed a Dukakis aide at the governor's conference that he had told reporters Dukakis is running. How could he tell? Cuomo said the evidence was the plethora of Dukakis aides at the convention. Dukakis says his goal is simply to be reelected governor. "I've often said I could do this job for 20 years, and love it." But he is giving 1988 some thought. The party's policy commission, he says, may be able to flesh out some ideas that will bring a Democratic victory, just as the old policy council of the late 1950s contributed to John Kennedy's victory in 1960. "We've got a unique opportunity in this state to at least test out some things which, if successful, can shape national policy," he says. "There's something about being governor that allows you to do things that you can't do in Congress."

His staff isn't so coy. They are panting with anticipation of a Dukakis presidential bid. Dukakis had 2,000 students while he was at Harvard, many of whom have since become professionals spread across the country. "There's a pool of talent right there that would love to see Michael active on the national stage," says John de Villers, the

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governor's executive assistant. John Sasso, who ran Geraldine Ferraro's vice presidential campaign in 1984 before signing on as Dukakis's chief of staff, says the governor has "put substance on the table." And "there's almost a longing for substance, for serious ideas, for things that are working, for things that are in the best tradition of the Democratic Party but relevant to today."

Sasso is talking about E.T. and amnesty. These issues have left Dukakis "well positioned," adds de Villers. He's advocating ideas and getting attention—nothing politically tacky there. "If six months ago somebody had said welfare reform and tax amnesty would be major issues, they would have been a solitary voice," says de Villers, smiling at the thought. The trouble for Dukakis is that six months from now they may have faded. If they haven't, Dukakis is likely to be a player in 1988.

FRED BARNES

Job training? No, corporate welfare.

SON OF CETA

THE Job Training Partnership Act program, created in 1982, is one of President Reagan's proud accomplishments. Reagan frequently cites its 68 percent job placement rate for "economically disadvantaged" trainees as proof of the success of a public-private partnership. Former labor secretary Ray Donovan called JTPA "one of the greatest achievements in the history of government social policy," and current labor secretary Bill Brock calls it "a model for human resource programs." In fact, JTPA is a private-sector boondoggle that uses taxpayer dollars to pay for routine business operating costs.

JTPA was created in 1982 to replace the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. CETA was widely seen as a boondoggle, and almost everyone agreed that government training programs needed a face-lift. Reagan & Co. have done their best to portray JTPA as the antithesis of CETA. But the same people who ran CETA programs in many locales are now running JTPA, and most of JTPA's subcontractors were previously employed by CETA. JTPA lacks CETA's make-work public service employment, but it has several novel absurdities of its own.

JTPA spends $3.5 billion a year on programs for the "economically disadvantaged," displaced workers, summer jobs for youth, and the Job Corps. The summer jobs program and Job Corps have remained basically unchanged since CETA's time, when conservatives ridiculed them for being ineffective and wasteful. Otherwise, JTPA is oriented more toward the private sector, with programs advised by and sometimes directed by local Private Industry Councils largely composed of businessmen. The PICs are free to establish job training programs as they see fit. They only need to meet standards set by the Department of Labor for job placements, average wages, cost per placement, and total expenditures on youth.

JTPA's current success statistics aren't worth the paper they are written on. The national 68 percent placement rate is concocted from 50 state measurements with no consistency or uniformity. JTPA's placement figures are "largely one-day-on-the-job" figures, according to Gary Walker, a New York consultant who has evaluated the program for the Ford Foundation and others. A 1979 General Accounting Office report found that 78 percent of those who got jobs through government training programs in Tidewater, Virginia, either quit or were fired within six months. Perhaps even more misleading, JTPA's placement rate refers only to "graduates." In some states, people who drop out of training programs are treated as if they never existed. This little sleight of hand—routinely used in previous government training programs—makes JTPA look significantly more successful than it is.

THE Reagan administration claims that JTPA serves primarily the hard-to-employ. But up to twice as many people are eligible for JTPA as were for CETA. JTPA's guidelines are so broad that over 42 million people have been eligible for government-subsidized training since October 1983. (Fewer than two million have signed up.) Under CETA, recruits had to be unemployed or underemployed. Under JTPA, it is perfectly acceptable for someone to quit his current job and enter government-paid training for another one. Moreover, JTPA is serving a much lower percentage of high school dropouts (23 percent) than CETA did. Roughly a fifth of JTPAers have some college or post-high school education.

The average wage for JTPA hirees is $4.62 an hour—barely half the national average hourly wage of $8.64, and not exactly a banner achievement, since most JTPAers have high school degrees. If the college-trained and most capable recruits were left out of the average, the typical JTPA wage would probably be around four dollars an hour. Employers would have had to hire and possibly train people for these jobs regardless of JTPA. JTPA simply hires some low-income people for low-paying jobs instead of other low-income people who would have been hired without the program. Indeed, one government training expert noted that JTPA serves "the best of the economically disadvantaged." Cream-skimming—taking the most employable applicant, rather than the most needy—is pervasive. Walker's study noted that in one area, the local PIC paid a local private job training school that "reportedly turned down 25 eligibles for every one accepted; in another, a bank teller program screened 118 JTPA eligibles to get 19 enrollees." JTPA, in short, is training only very trainable people. Some locales are even actively recruiting trainees on college campuses. Since JTPA provides subsidies to employers who hire primarily the most able low-income people, needy, less-skilled job seekers may be worse off in the labor market than before JTPA was created.

JTPA primarily transfers the cost of job training from the

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private to the public sector. JTPA pays employers 50 percent of a worker's wages for six months if the employee is receiving on-the-job training. Little monitoring is done to ensure that businesses actually train the worker. The Private Industry Councils are encouraging businesses to use JTPA for their routine training expenses, and are proclaiming that participating companies have lowered their operating expenses.

In Cincinnati, JTPA is paying for in-house training program costs previously assumed by General Electric. In Spring Hill, Tennessee, JTPA will help pay training costs at General Motors's new Saturn plant. In New Jersey a Private Industry Council set up a special program, subsidized by JTPA, to train 40 youths to repair fast-food machines at McDonald's restaurants. It boasted that the program had a high placement rate, but McDonald's would have had to train people to fix the equipment anyway. The only difference was who was doing the training, and who was paying for it.

Where JTPA is not paying for training that would have occurred anyway, it often pays for training for jobs that don't exist. In the mining region of Minnesota, unemployment reaches 80 percent in some towns. With the decline of the American steel industry, demand for iron ore will remain depressed, and new industries are unlikely to enter the area. Yet JTPA is pouring in money to retrain the locals and help them search for nonexistent jobs. As a Labor Department study noted, "Relocation is part of the program that is not very popular among the [training] staff." Like agricultural subsidies that keep unsuccessful farmers on the farm, job training subsidies encourage people to stay in depressed areas with little or no hope of ever finding work.

Then there are JTPA's "employment-generating activities." The Private Industry Councils are using tax dollars to advertise and persuade businesses to relocate in their domain, and even to pay relocation costs in certain cases. Thus the federal government is giving the states money so that they can lure industries away from each other.

The most dubious "employment-generating activity" is the use of JTPA as a routine slush fund by local companies trying to procure federal contracts. Illinois used JTPA funds to set up Procurement Outreach Centers around the state to help local businesses chase federal contracts. The National Alliance of Business thought this program was so clever that it gave Illinois an award for the program. Federal tax dollars are being spent to pursue more federal tax dollars.

JTPA's youth programs are as bad as CETA's. Indiana Senator Dan Quayle, the chief author of the act, claims that "JTPA has a job placement rate . . . for the young people around 70 percent." But according to the Labor Department, less than 40 percent of JTPA youths get jobs—even for a single day. JTPA inflates its apparent success rate by mixing job placements and other "positive terminations"—including returning to school, and development of "youth competencies." The Private Industry Councils can count as "youth competencies" almost any activity that teenagers choose short of suicide. "Youth competencies" usually refers to "employability skills"—such as "world of work awareness," "making change" from a dollar, and demonstrating "effective non-verbal communication with others." This allows programs to measure their success by the number of certificates they hand out, rather than by the number of people who get jobs.

Even JTPA's pristine image is beginning to tarnish. The GAO reported in early 1984 that JTPA is vulnerable to the same kinds of fraud and abuse that destroyed CETA's credibility. Last June two staff members in Nevada were convicted for setting up a scam where employers hired nonexistent clients and split the wage subsidy with the staffers. *National Journal* recently reported that a JTPA program in Chicago with 45 staffers placed only 41 people in jobs in the previous year. If Reagan is going to brag about JTPA, he had better hurry.

JAMES BOVARD

James Bovard is a Washington writer.

Clarence Pendleton, freeloader.

BAD PENNY

IN 1981 Clarence M. Pendleton Jr., then president of the San Diego Urban League, let loose with the kind of statement that has since won him national notoriety as chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. "The best way to help poor folks," Pendleton told the *Los Angeles Times*, "is not to be one." Since then Pendleton has made certain he is not one of the "poor folks." An avowed partisan of the free-enterprise system, opponent of racial preference for blacks, and critic of federal funding for the poor, Pendleton has nevertheless used the government programs designed to help the poor and black to enrich himself and a few close associates.

The most prominent black in the Reagan administration, Pendleton has savaged the leaders of traditional civil rights organizations. He has accused them of being "new racists," leading blacks toward a "political Jonestown" by supporting the Democratic Party. He has condemned affirmative action as "immoral," called comparable worth "the looniest idea since 'Looney Tunes,' " and pledged to "walk with President Reagan and his administration to the end of the earth." He has hewed to the line set by his political mentor, Edwin Meese: the United States is now for the most part a color-blind society. Blacks should stop whining and start pulling themselves up by their bootstraps.

Pendleton has certainly pulled himself up, though not exactly by his bootstraps. He has turned the traditionally part-time position of commission chairman into virtually a

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full-time job. His salary last year was $67,300. Because he spent most of his time on the road making speeches, he also was reimbursed for expenses of $22,000. Pendleton has also placed on the commission as his special assistant Sydney I. Novell, a longtime associate. Working three-quarters time, she earned $41,300 and incurred expenses of $14,800 last year.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with working full time for civil rights. But Pendleton and Novell have also managed to squeeze in other money-making ventures over the last four years. Foremost among them was the San Diego County Local Development Corporation, of which Pendleton was the unpaid president and chairman of the board until January. The ostensibly nonprofit organization helps businesses that agree to hire low-income employees to obtain loans and loan guarantees from the Small Business Administration. Pendleton and Novell nearly bled the corporation to death. In late 1983 he arranged a lucrative contract for Novell. She received $1,200 per month and later $5,000 per month for processing SBA loan applications. She received a commission on each successful loan she processed. The corporation had previously paid local accountants to process the loans for commission only. Despite the doubts of corporation officials, Pendleton insisted that Novell be paid more than her contract called for. Once he even phoned the corporation's executive vice president at home after midnight and ordered him to pay her extra money. Novell received a total of $77,000 in 1985 when she was also earning over $40,000 as his assistant at the Civil Rights Commission. (Novell received $53,000 from the corporation in 1984, but did not report it on her CRC financial disclosure form.) The corporation's controller, Jeffery Sturman, says Novell was overpaid at least $20,000 over the last two years.

Concerned about the Novell contract, the SBA began investigating the corporation late last year. Pendleton compounded the SBA's concerns in December. He proposed that the firm fire its dozen or so employees, and allow Novell and Ron Johnson, another business associate, to take over the work. The takeover was potentially beneficial to Pendleton because of the $124,000 the corporation received in service fees on outstanding loans from the SBA in 1985. As a nonprofit organization, the firm had turned over virtually all of the money to the city and county governments. In return, the local governments had provided approximately $500,000 per year in federal support funds to pay for the group's offices and staff. Under the new arrangement, Pendleton would forgo the government funding but keep the fees himself. He estimated that borrowers would pay another $100,000 the first year for processing new loans.

LAST DECEMBER, after Media General News Service and the San Diego newspapers broke several embarrassing stories about Pendleton's activities, the California attorney general's office announced its own investigation. It was also revealed that Ron Johnson himself was in default on a $56,500 SBA loan when Pendleton was proposing that he help to run the Local Development Corporation. Pendleton retreated. He withdrew the proposal, agreed to terminate Novell's contract, and resigned as board chairman and president. The corporation, meanwhile, announced it had a $20,000 deficit. In March the SBA subpoenaed financial records from the development corporation and Pendleton.

In late March the General Accounting Office reported that it had found numerous irregularities at the Commission on Civil Rights. It said that many consultants were hired improperly, that personnel records were missing, and that in one instance $175,000 was spent. There is no record of what happened to the money.

Pendleton has explained everything in terms of his conservative politics. In his efforts to gain control of the Development Corporation, he said: "We were just trying to do the right thing to get free from government dependency." The criticism, he said, was motivated by his conservative beliefs. "If they [the media] can't get me on substance, they stir up 'Amos and Andy' stories like this because they don't like what I'm doing in Washington," he told the *Los Angeles Times*.

THE Pendleton pattern, though, is too well established to dismiss the criticism as baseless. Penny, as he likes to be called, grew up in a middle-class neighborhood in Washington, D.C. He graduated from Howard University, and, like his father, became Howard's swimming coach. He held that job for ten years before becoming head of Baltimore's Model Cities program. In 1972 San Diego Mayor Pete Wilson (now a Republican senator from California) recruited him to run the inner-city revitalization program there. A charming, roly-poly man who enjoys spicing intellectual conversations with ghetto banter, Pendleton socialized in San Diego with the likes of Wilson; Gordon Luce, chairman of Great American First Savings Bank and a member of Reagan's kitchen cabinet; and Ed Meese, who was a lawyer at the time.

In 1975 he became president of the San Diego Urban League, and began articulating a brand of black capitalism that earned him the enmity of many blacks and the admiration of the San Diego white establishment. He sealed his friendship with Meese in 1980. The San Diego City Council had decided to locate a new Navy hospital on vacant land in a predominantly black neighborhood. The council and black leaders hoped the hospital would create jobs in a poor area. Pendleton and Meese were leaders of a civic group that fought the inner-city location and that eventually got it changed. Pendleton was the only black active in the group.

During his time at the Urban League, Pendleton spent the organization's money freely. He used league funds to pay for his leased Peugot, his membership in the private University Club, his season tickets to the San Diego Clippers basketball games, his custom-tailored clothes, meals, and $5,000 in loans to friends, most of which was never repaid. He even had the league pay for his $750 United

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Way contribution. In addition Pendleton had a $1,200 monthly expense allowance for which he submitted no supporting documentation. Most of this was never reported to the league's board of directors.

Pendleton's political connections were paying off too. In January 1981, through his friendship with Luce, he got appointed to the board of directors of Great American First Savings Bank in San Diego. Great American was the bank that made four loans totaling $423,000 to Meese, and failed to take action even though Meese made no payments for eight months. Pendleton and other board members denied knowing anything about the loans. In November 1981 Meese arranged for Pendleton to be nominated as chairman of the United States Civil Rights Commission.

In the fall of 1981, when the Urban League's bookkeeper raised questions about Pendleton's spending habits, Pendleton brushed her off. She said he told her, "As long as my folks are in the White House, they ain't going to touch me." When she finally tattled on him to board members, Pendleton fired her. She filed suit and was given her job back. Pendleton then resigned. But on March 31, 1982, his last day in office, he wrote himself ten checks for $999 each to pay for vacation time he said he was owed. (He would have needed board approval to write any check for $1,000 or more.) The Urban League later filed suit against Pendleton to recover its money. When the suit was settled, its terms were kept secret.

It was 1981 when Pendleton apparently began doing business with Novell, about whom little is known. Her résumé says she obtained an MBA from Columbia University in 1976, but the school says it can find no academic record for her. From 1979 to 1981 she worked in the Urban League's national headquarters doing commercial development work. Subsequently Pendleton gave her a $10,000 consulting contract for a proposed office building in San Diego. The building was never built, but Novell remained in San Diego as Pendleton's business partner and aide. She has refused all requests for interviews.

UNDER Pendleton the Urban League's business enterprises were largely unprofitable—except for Pendleton's associates'. In 1981, for example, three of his colleagues split a commission of almost $10,000 on the sale of two houses owned by a subsidiary of the Urban League. The league received $300.

In 1980 Pendleton even formed a phony minority front firm with two white businessmen. The purpose of Urban Industrial Suppliers was to win contracts with governments and corporations hoping to encourage black businessmen. Pendleton falsely swore that he was the firm's president. Federal and local government agencies saw through the ruse and refused to certify Urban Industrial Suppliers for minority set-aside contracts. The firm did succeed in obtaining contracts with several large corporations, including Bechtel. These days Pendleton wins points with the White House by denouncing as racist governmental programs that give preferential treatment to blacks.

After Pendleton's departure, the San Diego Urban League chapter was left a shambles. Records were missing or incomplete. In one instance, nearly $50,000 was supposed to have been spent rehabilitating houses in San Diego, but there are no records to indicate what, if anything, was done to the houses, or where the money went. When Pendleton left, the league's deficit was $179,000, and for a time auditors thought the chapter might have to fold.

The week after Pendleton resigned from his San Diego job, he was sworn in as chairman of the Civil Rights Commission. That same month he also became president of a black conservative organization called the New Coalition for Economic and Social Change, which was supported by the Heritage Foundation, the Coors brewery, and other right-wing groups. He hired Novell, who was also working at the Civil Rights Commission, and had the group's headquarters moved to San Diego. At a time when he ostensibly was working almost full time at the Civil Rights Commission, Pendleton received a salary of $5,000 a month from the coalition. After eight months on the job, he left without explanation. Henry Lucas, a San Francisco dentist who founded the coalition, refuses to comment on Pendleton's job performance. The group is now largely inactive.

The Pendleton pattern recurred when he took over a consortium of private trade schools in San Diego. In 1983 Pendleton was named executive director of the group. The hope was that his political clout would attract increased federal job-training funds. Unfortunately, his overhead costs ate up much of the federal aid that came in. Besides Pendleton's $1,000-a-month salary (later raised to $2,000 a month), two of his friends were brought on board. At the same time, he fired the group's project director and replaced the group's bookkeeper. By November 1985 the consortium's board chairman told other board members that they faced a "severe financial crisis." Pendleton and all but one employee were laid off.

Thus far Pendleton's ways have not hurt his standing with the administration or even with conservatives most critical of black dependency on government spending. Pendleton's misdeeds at the Urban League were chronicled in detail by Lynne Carrier, a reporter with the *San Diego Tribune*. But because of shoddy staff work by the FBI and the Senate Judiciary Committee, the senators who approved Pendleton's nomination knew only a fraction of what had happened in San Diego. Black conservatives sympathetic with the Reagan administration are reluctant to criticize Pendleton publicly for fear of discrediting their cause. And Ed Meese, who is in a position to know of Pendleton's financial ineptitude, obviously doesn't care. He prefers to retain the administration's most prominent and outspoken black defender. It seems that Pendleton has become what he hates most: a black man employed by the government primarily because of the color of his skin.

STEVEN T. GOLDBERG

Steven T. Goldberg is a reporter for Media General News Service in Washington.

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Third World debt hoax.

WHERE THE MONEY WENT

BY JAMES S. HENRY

THE toppling of Ferdinand Marcos and Baby Doc Duvalier has focused attention on the wealth that Third World oligarchs have plundered and stashed abroad. The collapse of oil has left countries like Mexico and Venezuela begging for relief from their debts. These two stories—capital flight and international debt—are part of the same story. In some cases, the wealthiest classes of poor countries have actually sent more money out of their countries than foreign borrowing has brought in—and often it's the same money. American banks have promoted, and profited from, both sides of the transaction. Sometimes the money never even leaves the United States. The entire cycle is completed with a few bookkeeping entries in New York.

More than half of the money borrowed by Mexico, Venezuela, and Argentina during the last decade has effectively flowed right back out the door, often the same year or even month it flowed in. Indeed, there are already enough private foreign assets owned by the citizens of major debtor nations to go a long way toward servicing their countries' foreign debts. The most aggressive banks, such as Citibank, have probably accumulated almost as much in assets from poor countries as they have loaned to them. Their real role has been to take funds that Third World elites have stolen from their governments and to loan them back, earning a nice spread each way.

American government policies make it far too easy to transfer and hide financial assets. As a result, the U.S. itself is one of the world's largest tax havens, and the largest for Latin America. Indeed, because of such policies the U.S. is actually a net *debtor* of Latin American countries.

It all comes down to one of the largest wealth transfers in history, with a few thousand affluent families and their retainers cackling all the way to the bank, the poor people of these countries indentured for years to work off the debts, the bankers playing a clever double game, and American taxpayers expected to subsidize bailouts that make the 1975 New York City debt crisis look like a rounding error. This is the *real* story of the "debt crisis": the story of what happened to all the money.

Consider Mexico. On March 6, a Mexico City newspaper published a list of 575 names of Mexican nationals, each of whom has at least one million dollars in deposits with foreign banks. The exposure of these *"sacadolares"*—people who take out dollars—caused an uproar because it comes just as Mexico is once again pleading bankruptcy to its international bankers and the U.S. Treasury. Mexico maintains that it needs another six billion to ten billion dollars of new foreign loans and interest subsidies this year to avert insolvency. This would be the second major bailout for Mexico in the last three years.

One example of the *"sacadolares"* may be the president of Mexico himself, Miguel de la Madrid. A Harvard-bred technocrat, de la Madrid was anointed by the previous president, Lopez Portillo, whom he had served as minister of budget. He had never before held elective office. (But then some say that no one really holds elective office in Mexico.)

Portillo was a stout law professor whose regime was distinguished by profligate spending, wildly optimistic growth plans, and corruption that was unprecedented even by Mexican standards. All of this was paid for on time. Between 1978 and 1982 the country's foreign debt more than doubled, to $85 billion. Today it approaches $100 billion, one of the highest debt levels per dollar of national income in the world. Very little of this money went into productive investments. Billions were squandered on noncompetitive steel plants, a six-billion-dollar nuclear power plant that still doesn't function, a gas pipeline to nowhere, wasteful development loans, arms, and payoffs to contractors and public officials. (Portillo, who moved to Rome after leaving office, is widely rumored to have absconded with over one billion dollars.)

Western bankers looked the other way as their money was wasted. The loan fees were lucrative, and many of the banks' corporate customers were making bundles on these "white elephants." The banks also complacently assumed that the U.S. government would never allow either Mexico or Citibank to go bankrupt. Furthermore, until 1981 or so, no one at any particular bank knew just how much money the *other* banks were lending to Mexico.

De la Madrid's first promise when he took office was to seek a "moral renovation" and rebuild the confidence of Mexico's investors. He lectured the nation on the need for "belt-tightening." Unemployment grew to over 30 percent and real wages sank to 1963 levels. It was thus a little embarrassing that just as de la Madrid arrived on his first official visit to Washington in May 1984, Jack Anderson revealed a secret U.S. intelligence report that de la Madrid himself had been accumulating substantial deposits in a Swiss bank account—at least $162 million during 1983 alone. (The deposits were transferred by wire—the Na-

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tional Security Agency had been listening. The *New York Times* subsequently confirmed the story.) The State Department issued a curious statement that the "U.S. government applauds President de la Madrid's commitment to addressing the issue of honesty in government."

THERE IS NO WAY to know exactly how much capital has left Mexico. Banks naturally try to keep the figures secret. But there are two accounting techniques that enable us to make indirect estimates. One is to measure the discrepancy between net exports of goods and services and net imports of capital. The difference ought to reflect net short-term capital flows, and subtracting the known capital imports should give us a rough figure for the unknown capital exports. All of these figures are inexact. (Cynics note that Mexico's official balance-of-payments statistics overlook both its biggest import, arms, and its second-biggest export, drugs.) But in the case of Mexico, a second method of calculation produces surprisingly similar results. This is simply to take all the money that's known to have flowed in from abroad, subtract the known ways it's been put to use, and assume that the rest flowed back out again.

Both methods indicate that capital flight soared during the Portillo years, especially from 1979 to 1981, just as Mexico's foreign debt was exploding. For example, in 1981, while Mexico was taking on about $20 billion in new foreign debt from commercial banks, capital flight was nine billion dollars to $11 billion. After 1981, capital flight started to decline: there was just not that much more to take out. Growth in new debt also stopped. Over the years from 1974 to 1985, Mexico borrowed $97 billion and sent about half—$50 billion—right back out again. Things were even worse elsewhere. Argentina's capital outflow during this decade was over 60 percent of its foreign borrowing, and in Venezuela there was virtually a dollar-for-dollar offset. In contrast, Brazilians (11 percent) and even Marcos's cronies in the Philippines (25 percent) were much less aggressive in moving capital out of their countries.

Hidden capital exports are only part of the story, since these private investments have grown in value since leaving Mexico. Many Mexicans prefer investing abroad in very short-term assets, especially bank time deposits and Treasury bills. These are safe, highly liquid, untaxed, and simple. The volume of U.S. bank time deposits owned by foreigners has grown dramatically in the past few years, driven by Latin American flight capital. The Mexicans are the largest single source. Private bankers and investment advisers who serve this market say that probably two-thirds or more of Mexican flight capital has found its way into time deposits. Now, these experts say, some large Mexican depositors have begun to shift their holdings into U.S. government securities, because of concern about the health of U.S. banks that have loaned too much money to places like Mexico!

Making some reasonable assumptions about the return on these investments, and also assuming that no taxes have been paid—either to the U.S., because there is no tax owed on "portfolio interest" earned by nonresidents, or to Mexico, because of outright tax evasion—we can estimate how much Mexican flight capital is now abroad. These calculations are subject to all sorts of qualifications. But if they are even close to being accurate, they suggest that by 1984 the value of Mexican flight capital exceeded the face value of all commercial bank loans to Mexico, and by 1985 it was closing in on the face value of the country's total external debt. Since these tattered loans to places like Mexico are actually worth far less than their face value, it seems quite likely that Mexico is actually a net creditor. As one Federal Reserve Board member said recently, "The problem is not that Latin Americans don't have assets. They do. The problem is, they're all in Miami."

The U.S. banks' share of loans to the major Latin American debtors has been less than 30 percent. By contrast, our share of the private flight capital from these nations is rumored to be 70 to 80 percent for Mexico and Venezuela, and 50 to 60 percent for Brazil and Argentina. This means that the U.S. as a whole is almost certainly a net debtor of all of these countries, except possibly Brazil. U.S. banks now have about $26 billion in outstanding loans to Mexico. Estimating the accumulated value of Mexican capital-flight wealth at $85 billion by 1984, and assuming that 70 percent is invested here, Mexicans have at least $30 billion more socked away in U.S. banks than Mexico owes to U.S. banks. Total direct investment by all U.S. firms in Mexico, by contrast, was six billion dollars in 1984. Similar calculations for the other Latin American major countries yield a total net balance in favor of the U.S. of $40 billion to $60 billion in 1984. By now the figure may exceed $70 billion. Again, these figures are conservative because they are based on comparing the dubious face value of the debts with the market value of the assets. In the case of Mexico, estimated annual earnings on these assets are already over three-quarters of the annual interest owed on Mexico's foreign debt.

The U.S. Treasury polls American banks, security dealers, and other businesses on their financial transactions with foreigners. These data are riddled with imperfections, most of which lead to underestimates. Still, they do show patterns that are consistent with other things we know. They indicate that between 1978 and 1985 Latin Americans and their Caribbean tax-haven proxies increased their short-term deposits with U.S. banks by at least $33 billion. At the same time U.S. banks were increasing their loans to Latin America by about $50 billion. Thus the basic role played by U.S. banks to Latin America was that of a middleman between the short-term deposits of the countries' elites and the medium-term loans demanded by their governments.

ANOTHER very important category of U.S. assets that Latin Americans have been stocking up on is cash. This is a "foreign asset" that is often physically kept at home. From a financial standpoint, it represents a net claim that foreigners have on the U.S. There is no direct measure of U.S. cash held abroad, but "dollarization" is rampant in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. It is common practice for people to squirrel away whole suitcases of $100 bills as a

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hedge against depreciation of the local currency. This helps to account for the curious fact that there are now about three $100 bills in circulation for each man, woman, and child in the United States. A recent U.S. Treasury "guesstimate" is that perhaps $20 billion worth of them are offshore.

Cash is also a preferred method of transferring money from local to foreign accounts. Venezuelans traveling to Miami reported over two billion dollars of cash in 1981 alone on the Treasury forms that entrants to the U.S. have to fill out. Currency has long poured into the Miami Federal Reserve district because of drug traffic. More recently, though, the El Paso and San Antonio Federal Reserve districts have reported net receipts of currency, reflecting the large cash deposits that Mexicans have been carrying across the border. The explosive growth of San Francisco's receipts during the past two years is apparently a combination of Philippine flight capital and a shift of drug money to the West Coast.

Who owns these assets? The typical Mexican investor with dollars at home or abroad is really pretty middle class. As one writer recently put it, "Even the Mexican City shoe-shine boys stockpile dollars." But even if everyone has a bit of it, the key fact about flight capital is that it is highly concentrated. At the very top are the bankers' wet dream, the superrich. These are the people of Citibank's "Global Elite," a list of 5,000 or so people from around the world who are supposed to have individual net worths greater than $100 million. The U.S. supposedly has about 500 to 600 such people, depending on the state of the stock market. In the Latin American context, these people include a lot of names most Americans—and indeed, most of their own countrymen, given their taste for discretion—have never heard of, but they are fabulously rich. These are the happy few that automatically qualify for services like the new American Express "Black Card," the ultra VIP credit card that has a credit line of $500,000 and offers services such as private planes, bodyguards, and access to Fifth Avenue stores in the wee hours of the morning for "solo shopping." Obviously at this level the key function of the card is not credit, but identity: "Do you know me? I may look like a twit, but I own Paraguay."

Meanwhile, Mexico's income per capita averages less than $2,000 a year. And since 1982, the debt problem has made things worse. Imports and domestic spending have been slashed to meet the interest bill. For the lower half of the population, this means that real incomes have fallen further from their already low base.

HOW DID Third World elites manage to convert all that foreign debt capital into private foreign assets? There are several explanations that are not mutually exclusive. The "innocent bystander" view holds that the local rich just happened to deploy their own assets abroad at precisely the time their governments chose to borrow heavily abroad to finance attempts at growth. Of course a more sensible approach would have been to fund public spending with taxes or direct foreign investment in the local economy. But local elites are so powerful that serious income or wealth taxes are almost unheard of, while domestic enterprise is protected by a host of barriers against foreign investment.

FURTHERMORE, local elites do not just react passively to the local governments. In many cases they *are* the local governments, or at least the executive committees. Thus a basic method of taking money out of Mexico has been to exploit overvalued official exchange rates with the help of foreign banks. The preservation of this exchange rate system even in the face of massive capital flight is very hard to understand unless we take into account the profits made from it by people in positions to influence policy.

There's also, of course, plenty of outright graft in converting dollars borrowed by government projects into private wealth. The actual pathways are endless: phony intermediary companies that recontract with foreign suppliers on public projects and take a hefty spread; importers who get permits to purchase foreign exchange for imports that either never get bought or are wildly over-invoiced; developers who get public loans for projects that don't exist; local "consultants" who are paid by U.S. suppliers in New York dollar accounts, and so on.

To what extent were American bankers aware of what was going on? It's a nice question. Some observers feel they must have been knowing, or at least willing, participants, just like the middlemen in phony-asset scams throughout financial history. This suspicion requires an assumption about the intelligence, cunning, and foresight of bankers that, in my experience, is not warranted. What's indisputable is that when wealthy Mexicans invest their own capital abroad, they are much more cautious than the foreign bankers who financed all their country's debt.

It's also indisputable that leading American banks are as involved in ferrying capital out of Mexico as they were in lending money to the country in the first place. The U.S. banks that are the most active in "international private banking" to wealthy Mexicans are Citibank, Morgan Guaranty, Bank of America, and Chase, plus several large regional banks in Texas and California. They all serve a key client list of at least several hundred wealthy Mexican customers. They all have very active calling programs designed to recruit new clients. They all play an active role in helping wealthy Mexicans get their money out of the country. They all help such customers design sophisticated offshore trusts and investment companies to shelter income from taxes and political exposure. They all try very hard to keep the identity of their customers a secret. They are all more or less actively involved in lobbying U.S. authorities to preserve policies toward taxation, bank regulation, and bank secrecy that are favorable to their clients.

"When we go in there," one international private banker told me about his trips to the Third World, "we're not taking any kind of information with us, and when we leave the country we don't have any papers with us either. You know, I tell [my boss] when I leave on a trip to remember my face if anything happens to me. But he says, don't worry, the bank will never admit that you were a part of us."

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"Pouch" services or their equivalents—helping clients move money secretly—are among the most important services that private bankers provide. If handled discreetly this can be a real competitive advantage, because among other things the bank learns enough about a customer's "private parts" to lock him in. The standard image of money-laundering is a bunch of shady characters trucking suitcases of cash through airports and depositing it in obscure banks in the Caymans, Florida, the Bahamas, or Switzerland. Although some of this obviously goes on, especially at the "drug-related" end of the business, this is not really first-class money-laundering at all. One banker recently described to me the challenge of helping rich clients to get money out of Mexico without leaving a trail: "You can buy dollars in Mexico from the Central Bank, no problem. The problem is that you are basically registering yourself, exactly what you don't want. You could go to a local bank, buy a $100,000 check there with pesos, and then send it to the States. But then when you deposit that check, it's going to show [what account] it went to. So what happens is . . . the customer would go to his own bank, draw a cashier's check in the name of [XYZ Foreign Bank], and deposit that in an [XYZ Foreign Bank] account. So his name is not on that check at all. Or deposits are made in a customer's peso account in a Mexican branch of a U.S. bank, and credits are made to the customer's dollar account in New York." Since November 1985 the Mexican government has restricted the use of the foreign banks' "peso windows" in Mexico in order to curtail such transfers. However, the more aggressive banks have already begun to help their private customers evade even this restriction by setting up parallel foreign exchange swaps that avoid the banking system entirely, leaving virtually no records. Again, the major banks have played a central role in disarming the new restrictions.

The really clever private bankers also have devised methods so that Mexicans can use their foreign capital without leaving home, much less being taxed on it by their own governments. The favorite method is the so-called "back-to-back" loan, whereby the bank "loans" the client his own money. This not only reduces the client's taxes even further, but helps him take more money out of the country.

These international private bankers are not malevolent or obtuse. They are doing exactly what they get paid to do. Theirs is not a labor of love, but a very profitable business, with returns on assets of two to three percent and pretax returns on equity of 100 percent and more. In an era when most other low-cost sources of bank funds have dried up, private banking to Third World countries looks pretty good. In fact, this was just how lending to Third World governments looked in the 1970s, relative to commercial, retail, or housing lending at home.

CITIBANK is clearly the most aggressive American bank in international private banking ("IPB"). It appears to have over 1,500 people dedicated to this activity worldwide, and over $26 billion in IPB assets. In Latin America, Citibank probably has over 50 direct IPB employees in offices inside Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, and Panama, where it also owns banks with local branches. Since discretion is essential, most of these employees are officially connected to other parts of the bank. Because of its nearly four billion dollars of loan exposure to Brazil, Citibank prefers to serve the Brazilian flight-capital market out of an office in Montevideo, Uruguay, where bank secrecy laws are very stiff.

OVERALL, at least half of Citibank's $26 billion or so in IPB assets probably belongs to Latin Americans. This compares with Citibank's total loan exposure to the "Big Four"—Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Venezuela—of about $10.3 billion. Thus, even allowing for loans to the rest of Latin America, Citibank probably comes very close to owing more money to Latin Americans than it is owed.

Banks are required to report large loans outstanding to individual countries. But there is no requirement to report the country origins of private banking assets. This secrecy is probably no accident. In the case of several major banks and other financial institutions, the truth might be a little embarrassing—they are not really net lenders to these countries at all. The aggregate balance of loans and deposits is a little clearer. Our best estimate is that U.S. banks as a whole probably now manage international private banking assets of roughly $100 billion to $120 billion, 60 to 70 percent of which comes from Latin American private banking assets, compared to total U.S. bank loans outstanding to Latin America of about $83 billion. Not only is the U.S. economy as a whole probably a net debtor of Latin America: our commercial banks alone are close to being net debtors of Latin America.

But this is the kind of debtor anyone would love to be. Combining what we know about capital flight and private lending, a reasonable estimate of the banks' profits on the "round-trip" for Mexico alone is $2.4 billion in 1984. On an equity base of four billion dollars, that's a return of 70 percent. One can quibble about the precise assumptions behind such estimates, but the basic findings are robust. U.S. banks have so far reaped a bonanza from their own disastrous international lending policies of the last decade.

As Third World leaders and international bankers warm up for another chorus of moaning about the debt crisis, they need a forcible reminder that the solution may lie in their own hands. Countries like Mexico should get no more money until they have enacted reforms to ensure that the dollars we lend them don't come right back again in the bank accounts of rich private citizens. The United States should take steps of its own to correct policies that encourage capital flight—especially laws that make us a haven for foreigners flouting their own nations' tax systems. Finally, international banks must take responsibility for the impact that "international private banking" is having on the poor nations where it operates. The easier it is for these nations' ruling elites to smuggle assets abroad, the less incentive there is to clean up at home. The capital flight these banks are promoting and facilitating in the 1980s is just as irresponsible as the loans they were peddling in the 1970s. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Roman Holiday

In 1937 the producers of *A Nous la Liberté* filed suit against Charlie Chaplin, asserting that in *Modern Times* he had lifted material from René Clair's film made in 1931. Clair refused to join in the suit; he said, "If Chaplin has been inspired by my film, it is a great honor for me." The suit was dropped. In February 1986 Ginger Rogers filed suit against the producers of Federico Fellini's new film, *Ginger and Fred*, charging that her consent was not obtained for the use of her name and likeness, that she is depicted in a false light, and that Fellini "depicts the film's dance team . . . as having been lovers, and depicts them in a seedy manner." I watch the papers daily in hopes that Fred Astaire will echo Clair's remark. First, it would be appropriate for film's greatest dancer to tip his top hat to one of film's preeminent directors. Second, I have always loathed Ginger Rogers—a professional virgin 15 years before Doris Day—even when she was whirling in Astaire's arms. Third, the complaint that the Fellini couple's affair contains implications about the original Ginger and Fred is (if the Federal Court will permit me to rule in advance) complete hooey.

Ginger and Fred
(MGM/UA)

I wish I could continue comment on the ever-repellent Rogers by saying that history will make her look silly for objecting to a fine work. Sadly, that's not the case. Fellini's new film is basically a lot of Fellini's old films, broken up into components, some of which were then reassembled along with a few new elements. The nub of the story has much more resemblance to Neil Simon's *The Sunshine Boys* than to the lives of Astaire and Rogers: two vaudeville performers, who worked together for 15 years and haven't seen each other for 30 years, are reunited for a big TV program. But there even the resemblance to Simon ends. This pair are man and woman, were dancers, and not only didn't loathe each other offstage, they were lovers.

They were known professionally as Ginger and Fred. Played by Giulietta Masina and Marcello Mastroianni, they haven't the slightest resemblance to their namesakes; but they did wear similar clothes, tried to dance like the famous pair, used the same tunes, and cashed in, as they imitatively could—in music halls, not in films—on the Italian passion for Hollywood. Ginger has since become a grandmother and runs a little business in her hometown near Genoa. Fred, whose base seems to be Naples, grifts and drifts along as he can, long since abandoned by the wife he married after the split with Ginger. Well into the film, we learn that, when Ginger left 30 years earlier, Fred almost literally lost his mind. This comes as a surprise because there is no hint when we see them meet for the first time in three decades that he is the least bit on edge.

This omission is part—a big part but only a part—of what's wrong with *Ginger and Fred*. The script is by Fellini; with Tonino Guerra, who collaborated on *Amarcord* and *And the Ship Sails On*; and with Tullio Pinelli, who collaborated on the first eight Fellini films. A bright augury, unfulfilled. Ginger is central from the start. We know a good deal about her before Fred appears; we know how she feels about responding to this TV invitation and about the reunion with Fred. Her characterization has no surprises, which means that we feel we know her, a feeling that is sustained. But from his first appearance Fred is only a facade on which a few attributes are pasted: trite remarks about aging, trite lewdness, trite fondness for grappa. As to what his life has been or will be, what he truly feels and thinks, we get virtually nothing. (His breakdown 30 years earlier seems arbitrarily stuck on to give him texture.) In treatment of the two main characters, the authors have left the script unbalanced. It's almost as if Ginger had paired up with any contemporary of hers for this TV show, any old-timer who would have said and done much the same things.

Most of the film, in dynamics and decor, reworks derivations from Fellini, Part Two. Fellini the First began in 1950 with *Variety Lights* (co-directed with Alberto Lattuada), and though uniquely personal, was one of a group of postwar realists concerned with poor people's struggles to survive. Then, after a three-year lapse, came *La Dolce Vita*, made by Fellini the Second, the baroque dramatist of the lives of those less needy, the Fellini whose style is so celebrated that it has almost obscured the earlier films. Yet both periods, as clearly marked as any two periods in any artist's career, have produced masterpieces. *I Vitelloni* (1953), about unemployed young men in a postwar provincial town, was as strong the last time I saw it as it was the previous 12 or 14 times. A few weeks ago I showed *8 1/2* (1962) to a film class, and I saw yet again that its depths keep deepening. *Amarcord* (1974) is not far behind.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

My Beautiful Laundrette. Fresh, comic, grave. Hanif Kureishi's script—flawlessly performed—is about Pakistanis in London and their relations with the English: successes, fights, amours. Unique and lovely. (Reviewed 4/7/86)

A Room with a View. Except for the custardy performance of Lucy, this Merchant-Ivory-Jhabvala transmutation of Forster's novel is a chuckly delight. (3/24/86)

Shoah. By now every reader will know that this is Claude Lanzmann's nine-and-a-half-hour documentary (shown in two parts) about the Final Solution, composed of post-1976 interviews. Every week more and more viewers are convinced of its lasting importance. (10/28/85)

Turtle Diary. Harold Pinter's deft adaptation of Russell Hoban's wry, dry novel is wryly and dryly acted by Glenda Jackson, Ben Kingsley, and Michael Gambon. A quiet comedy about two Londoners who return three sea turtles from an aquarium to the sea. (3/10/86)

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And the Ship Sails On (1983) is not in their class, but it has its own poignant, satiric vitality.

It's from the best films of Part Two and also from the lesser ones of that period that much of *Ginger and Fred* derives. The cartoons of contemporary garishness in architecture and etiquette, in dress and sexual blatancy, in engulfing commercialism, that Fellini has already treated in the pictures named above and in *Fellini's Roma* and *City of Women* and *Orchestra Rehearsal* get thinner reemployment in *Ginger and Fred*. So do the parades of grotesques. The film's occasion is the Christmas special of a popular TV variety show, and for this gala the producers have brought to Rome—where it all takes place—wild assortments of figures: look-alikes of famous people, dwarfs, a cow with 20 teats, an enfeebled and deaf old war hero, an orchestra of centenarians, and many others. The assembling of the guests at their hotel, the rehearsals at the studio, the bustle in the commissary and bars, always attended by bored assistants with bullhorns, produces something of the same effect as the teeming hell in *Fellini Satyricon*, except that the subject is contemporary and (a more important exception) is not as imaginatively lighted or costumed. Also, through the film runs a continuum of parody TV commercials. But all we can think about these commercials is: Doesn't Fellini know by now that TV commercials can't be parodied?

The whole bustling mess moves toward the TV show, of course, whose host is played by Franco Fabrizi, once the handsome scoundrel in *I Vitelloni* and now a carefully preserved Mr. Glitz. But the film takes too long to reach the TV show, not because of the time it uses but the time it wastes. A film that relies largely on an incessant flow of visual surprises and social clownings has to keep that flow incessantly fresh. *Ginger and Fred* doesn't.

Still, when the big moment comes, the moment when the dancing duo appear on the show, it's the best sequence in the picture. First, their dancing is not ludicrous. (Fred's knee buckles at one point, but he recovers.) We believe they might once have been mediocre professionals. In the middle of their number, the electricity fails—an accident for which we've been prepared by a previous power blackout. Those few minutes of darkness, in the middle of the big TV stage, while the studio audience waits quietly and the two old dancers sit on the floor

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and whisper to each other, are the closest that the film comes to the best in Fellini the Second—the quiet mystery under the glitter.

The lights come on. They finish their number. Later that night, they part at the railroad station as Ginger goes home. (The picture opened with her arrival at that station.)

Age has helped Masina negatively. It has further diminished the straining for winsomeness that hampered her in *La Strada* and *The Nights of Cabiria* and that had begun to lessen in *Juliet of the Spirits*. Now she is a nicely behaved, late-middle-aged woman of no particular presence but without fakery. Mastroianni, one of the most gifted actors in postwar film, coasts here. True, the authors gave him little to work with, but he makes the least of it. He lets baldness, facile grossness, general apathy do most of the work for him. Not once in the course of his performance did I feel anything from him or for him.

The lighting by Tonino delli Colli and Ennio Guarnieri is not up to the highest Fellini mark. The same is true of the costumes by the talented Danilo Donati. (Why does Donati give Ginger and Fred similar tweed overcoats? Why, in their now-different lives, would they be wearing similar clothes?) The editing, too—with Mastroianni's younger brother, Ruggero, once more a Fellini editor—seems to strive for past Fellini effects.

Ever since *Variety Lights*, Fellini's films have displayed his love of show business. Often that love has been candidly of the most rankly glamour-struck type; more often that love has opened complexities about performance in life as well as onstage. But his enthrallment with show biz has never served him less fruitfully than here. In that blackout during the TV number, Fred whispers to Ginger, "What are we doing here?" With no kind of malicious pounce, I have to note that the film itself never answers—never approaches—that question. The dancing pair remeet, then part. Nothing of significance happens in that incident for them or for us. The script has an initiating gimmick with no consequences. The film merely allows Fellini to take his baroque style off the shelf—a style inimitable and sometimes miraculous—and give it an airing. Next time, perhaps, to more point.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Rumania, Rumania

The supremacy of English-style classical theater, virtually unquestioned in this country for the past 40 years, is now being seriously challenged in the United States by a group of expatriated Rumanians concerned with deconstructing sacred dramatic texts. A number of English-speaking directors, notably the internationalist Peter Brook, have also worked this vein effectively. But it is essentially an Eastern European phenomenon that started in Soviet Russia during the twenties with Vsevolod Meyerhold's celebrated production of Gogol's *The Inspector General*, and then spread west to the satellite countries. Following the appearance of the Rumanians Andrei Serban, Andrei Belgrader, Liviu Ciulei, and Lucian Pintilie on our shores, classical deconstruction emerged as a native movement dominating the American avant-garde and some of our resident theater.

The establishment of this movement, as well as its nervous reception by critics and public alike, became evident during Joseph Papp's brief control of the Vivian Beaumont—when Serban was invited to stage radical productions of *The Cherry Orchard* and *Agamemnon*—and during Ciulei's auspicious, if controversial and short-lived, reign as artistic director of the Guthrie. If it was Ellen Stewart of La Mama who first invited Serban to the United States to evolve his masterpiece on Greek classical themes, *Fragments of a Trilogy*, it was Ciulei who imported Pintilie to direct *The Seagull* and *Tartuffe* (which Pintilie later restaged at the Arena Stage in Washington). Now Ciulei, set adrift by the Guthrie, has resurfaced at Papp's Public Theater with a production of *Hamlet*, and Pintilie has just opened a new version of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* at the Arena Stage. (As for traditional classical production, the American Conservatory Theatre, its chief native exponent, has faltered following a series of dull seasons and the resignation of William Ball. No other major company is generating excitement.)

The Rumanian conquest, however, is far from complete—at least to judge by Ciulei's *Hamlet*. It is a production at once carefully modulated and curiously safe—not exactly a surrender to traditional directorial styles, but obviously informed by traditional caution. Papp has an obsession with *Hamlet*, which he seems to produce about every three years (last with Diane Venora in the lead). This version was apparently commissioned for the promising classical actor Kevin Kline. Kline is not yet ready for the role; like the young Prince, he lacks advancement. The only time he seemed able to join his own experience with that of his character was during an athletic duel scene with Laertes, beautifully staged by B. H. Barry in a swashbuckling manner suitable to *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Kline first appears holding his head in his hand, his hair wild, his body wrapped up inside a black Victorian great coat. His physical model is the Russian Raskolnikov, but what he gives us is Rotarian blandness. Kline's Hamlet has no overdrive in his internal motor, neither mercurial passion nor suppressed hysteria. He is pleasant, good-natured, intelligent, but too self-assured to suffer, and less anguished than annoyed by the problems that plague him. He is flat and perfunctory with the ghost, mildly upset by his mother's adultery. He can glare at Claudius and twit courtiers, but shows little hatred for the bloat king and few pangs of conscience over Polonius's murder. More at home with players than aristocrats, he joins them as a jester, applying clown-white pancake. With Ophelia, he's a stand-up comic, but the humor's unleavened with irony or wit. This Hamlet is a bit of a yuppie, destined to be a stockbroker or a lawyer. You can't help liking him, but you share his impatience over the obstacles impeding his career.

This is a failing of emotional commitment, not of intellect. Kline's reading of the text is remarkably clear, and on two occasions even original. I never realized, until the actor stressed the word "set" in the passage "The time is out of joint" ("O cursed spite / That ever I was born to *set* it right!"), that Shakespeare's metaphor was chiropractical, while Kline's expression of astonishment on "The rest

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is silence" illuminated this line as the resolution of Hamlet's internal debate on the nature of death in "To be or not to be."

For the most part, however, the actor managed to avoid facing any of the knotty problems of the play, and so did the production. The directorial interpolations were usually decorative rather than interpretive—Gertrude removing her wig to reveal gray hair beneath, Ophelia going mad during a dinner party while buttering bread and pulling flowers from the centerpiece, the First Player reading his Hecuba speech to the accompaniment of a cello, Claudius coming on like a portly U.S. Grant, Laertes goose-stepping like a Nazi youth. Ciulei has set the play in the late 19th century in a mythical country resembling Graustark or Zenda, and the minimalist scenery (mobile burnished columns and a diagonal screen upstage lit with abstract forms by Jennifer Tipton) provides fluidity and crispness. But the generalized environment puts the burden of specificity on the Victorian costumes (richly designed by William Ivey Long), and adds a peculiar fleshiness to all the characters, excluding the usually incorporeal ghost.

Like Kline's Hamlet, the acting is competent without being particularly charged. Two young people stand out, both from Ciulei's period at the Guthrie, one of them miscast. Harriet Harris, a passionate Titania in the Guthrie's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is too mature for Ophelia, whom she endows with an incipient neurasthenia more appropriate to a Tennessee Williams character; still, she manages to provide the truest, most powerful emotion of the evening. And David Pierce's Laertes—a prissy, cold-blooded cadet from a fascist military academy—has a repressed ferocity that is menacing and dangerous. These excepted, the actors tend to slide along the surface of their roles. Ciulei shows more interest in moving the action forward than investigating the text, keeping us more occupied with stage business than with thematic interpretation or character plumbing. Shakespeare's story is clear enough; what is less clear is the animating impulse driving the performance.

AT THE Arena Stage, Lucian Pintilie's version of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* is a genuinely new look at the play, which pulls it out of canvas realism into a world of poetic metaphor and savage farce. The opening act in old Werle's

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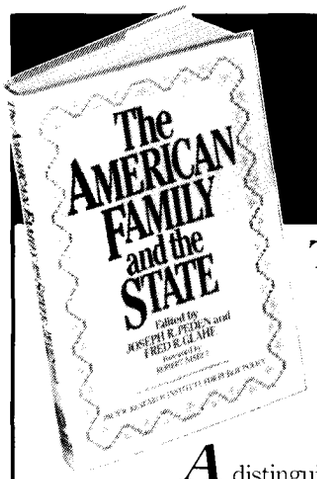

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house is not altogether promising, but then it's a fearfully difficult piece of exposition (the second act of this five-act play is largely expository too). Pintilie tries to distract our attention from the two servants who provide Ibsen's background material by using strained devices behind a transparent Mylar mirror, including a sumptuous banquet and an anachronistic slide show of vacation photographs, conducted by Mrs. Sorby while the Chamberlains sing "Harvest Moon." (Even in the twenties, the setting of this updated production, Kodak color carousels had not yet been invented.) Here the director appears to be forcing visual interest on a talky drama.

WHEN the scene changes to Hialmar Ekdal's lodgings, however, the play begins to develop a cumulative power. Pintilie's setting is much too spacious to suit the humble means of the Ekdal family—it has the dimensions of a fashionable loft in Soho—while the metal stairway leading to the "attic" containing the denizens of Old Ekdal's simulated forest, wild duck included, is high enough to suggest they own the whole piece of real estate, substantial holdings for such impoverished people. (Pintilie is said to have made architectural modifications in the Kreeger in order to accommodate this ambitious design.) Still, the furnishings of this enormous room are gritty enough, including a metal desk and filing cabinet, a clothesline, and a huge arc lamp used for Hialmar's photography. And the squalor is enhanced, despite Gina's heroic efforts to keep the place clean, by eggs periodically splattering on the floor from the attic above.

For all his concern with grandiose environments and visual punctuation, Pintilie keeps us focused on the theme of *The Wild Duck*, which is the malignant effect of utopian idealism on those who need illusions in order to survive. In his effort to lead the Ekdals toward "a true conjugal union," Gregers Werle exposes Gina's adultery with his father, old Werle, and the dubious paternity of their daughter, Hedwig. It is a story that concludes morbidly with Hedwig's suicide, but Ibsen nevertheless realizes it is an occasion for ferocious satire, even farce, especially since Gregers (played by Christopher McCann with flattop haircut, Trotsky whiskers, and mealy-mouthed self-righteousness) is such a priggish wimp and Hialmar (played by Richard Bauer with the flamboyance of a road company Cyrano) such a histrionic poseur. The confusion of styles is precisely what gives the play modernity, and the way the director treats the climax adds postmodern touches as well.

Despite prophetic warnings from Dr. Relling (played with sardonic brilliance by Stanley Anderson, looking like a squashy, whiskey-soaked Anthony Hopkins), Gregers's meddling has destroyed the entire family. While Hialmar vacillates between abandoning the household and completing his breakfast, Hedwig commits suicide in the attic to the accompaniment of screeching barnyard animals. Her body falls to the floor like another splattered egg. The arc light begins to turn in circles around the room. Old Ekdal stands babbling on the stairs. Hialmar, in an orgy of self-pity, shouts hysterically at the ceiling ("How could you do this to me?") and turns to Gina for comfort. She shrinks at his touch. The spoiled priest Molvig starts praying. Dr. Relling hurls a drink in his face. Relling then drags Gregers the length of the stage to the couch and, shaking him like a puppy, forces his face into the dead body of his victim. Rising, Gregers pulls violently at Relling's nose, Relling pulls Gregers's hair, and with the two locked in a clumsy grappling match, Hedwig's body falls slowly off the couch. Gregers runs from the room, hitting his head on the door frame, as Relling shouts after him, "Go to hell" (adding, with a grin, "See you tomorrow").

This inspired scene, during which the audience is alternately juggling pathos, laughter, and surprise, is in retrospect the moment toward which the whole production moves, and it redeems whatever casting flaws, longueurs, or directorial excesses occasionally plague it. Using his own free stage version based on a translation by David Westerfer, Pintilie has made the work entirely contemporary and immediate without altering its essential structure. And that, of course, has been the major contribution of our expatriate Rumanian friends to our perception of the classics: to make us see them as fresh works of art rather than anthology pieces or curatorial artifacts. Ciulei, perhaps daunted by the critical atmosphere of New York, has momentarily flagged in his approach; but his protégé, Pintilie, has picked up the fallen pennant and waved it proudly aloft.

KRAMER VS. KRAMER

The Revenge of the Philistines: Art and Culture, 1972-1984 by Hilton Kramer

(The Free Press, 445 pp., $25)

When Hilton Kramer retired as chief art critic of the *New York Times* in March of 1982 and, underwritten by an ammunition and chemical company called the Olin Corporation, founded his cunningly named *New Criterion*, there was some carousing in New York art circles. King Stork, in a reversal of the ancient fable, had left the swamp to King Log. By then, Kramer's manner had become one of the fixtures of American art discourse. You could hear him blocks away like a truck with a shot muffler warming up in an alley—his arrhythmic, industrial-strength prose; the unconstrained ideological bias; his nostalgia for issues and cliques of New York intellectual life in the fifties (an emotion whose intensity was all the more remarkable for the fact that he was too young to have played a real part in them); his rancor in attack and his bravery in defense.

Kramer wrote clearly. Few read him for pleasure, but none could deny his intelligence, his tenacity, or his imperviousness to art fashions. Over the years Kramer earned a name for incorruptibility in a field much afflicted by mutual back-scratching. He did not take freebies, as both Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg had so conspicuously done. He did not deal, as several of New York's star museum personnel in the sixties and seventies unabashedly did. He was a moralizer (albeit a somewhat erratic one) in a field whose ethical sense, secured by the loony American belief that art is the fluoride of the soul, is no better (and in some ways much worse) than the rag trade's. Thus he was widely respected and narrowly loathed. *Oderint dum timent*—no dishonorable

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motto for a critic. The American art market, which in the early eighties was entering the most bloated, fashion-ridden, and image-infatuated phase in its whole history, was not sorry to see him quit the pulpit of the *Times*.

It soon became clear that his successor meant no harm to anyone. In place of those paragraphs creaking with argumentative zeal and political spite, one now got what Cyril Connolly, 20 years earlier, had called John Russell's "spun-sugar style." Russell's range was much wider. Kramer seldom had anything fresh to say on art made before Courbet or outside the West, and was almost exclusively concerned with modernist (i.e., post-1870) painting, sculpture, and photography. Russell, a man of larger enthusiasms and a broader historical culture, could write attractively and at length on almost anything from Paleolithic stags to Matisse pot plants. Given the eclectic diet offered by American museums and galleries, this was no small journalistic advantage. But the real difference was one of temper. Kramer rarely ducked a fight and Russell never got into one. There was more piss and vinegar in Mimi Sheraton's food columns for the *Times* than in Russell's art criticism. It projected a Panglossian vision of the art world as an ideal republic of the like-minded, the discreet, the cultivated, and the sunny, where promotion and manipulation go unmentioned and museum policies remain essentially unquestioned.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

From the *Times*'s point of view, this was ideal. It suited the heavy stress, imposed by its management from the late seventies onward, on guiding the reader through the forest of cultural spectacle *as consumer*. Manning the glory-pump was never Kramer's forte, but it is Russell's. Of course, the change was part of a general trend; this conversion of so much art-journalism into Reviewzak, accompanied by an unconflicted, lyrical promotion of "art experience," fitted the dominance of the market. Neither should one ignore Russell's occasional ability to pop some glass into the soufflé, as when writing about the spurious values of "cultural exchange"; it amounts to little more than the trading of already-exchanged paintings, with no serious intent beyond making another crowd-pleaser—"Treasure Dachas of Soviet Russia," as it were, to be paraded before the Washington public by the National Gallery, with the help of the egregious Armand Hammer. But when Blake said "Damn braces, bless relaxes," he was absolutely right, which accounts for the nostalgia some *Times* readers feel for Kramer.

The latest view from the New York Hilton is an anthology of some 85 pieces, written between 1972 and 1984 and mostly published in the *Times* and the *New Criterion*. Like all critical journalism written under pressure—and the strain of writing on art for the *Times* is unique in art criticism, for it can entail cranking out 3,000 to 4,000 words a week—they vary widely in grace. Some, like his reflections on the 1974 "French Painting 1774-1830: The Age of Revolution," or his short note on the late Cézanne show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1977, are perfunctory responses to major curatorial achievements and do not bear reprinting. For some reason, events like these bring forth Kramer's flattest prose: he can tell you that aesthetic excitement is there, but he cannot convey it except with bromides like "we now feel that we are seeing [Mont Saint-Victoire] for the first time." On the other hand, the long essay on the revamping of MOMA that closes the book is one of the most cogent reflections I have read on the nature and mission of this Kremlin of modernism. In between there is a fairly full parade of Kramer's strengths and weaknesses as a critic. One is glad to have them all, since quite a lot of Kramer's journalism does transcend the hurried and ephemeral nature of his medium, and since generally publishers seem reluctant to publish critical anthologies on art; it does not pay.

First, the strengths. Kramer has never been afraid of going against the grain—indeed, of hacking right into it when he needs to—on artists he wants to defend. On the qualities (to take only a few names) of Fairfield Porter, or Philip Pearlstein, or Louise Nevelson, or the exquisitely elegant and serious sculpture of the late Elie Nadelman, he radiated solid conviction and real sympathy at a time when few critics, if any, were prepared to undertake a deep defense of them. He was one of the first American art critics to take photography seriously, and his essays on Fox Talbot, Steichen, and especially Irving Penn are well worth preserving. On more-trodden ground, such as the sculpture of Alberto Giacometti, he can be not merely eloquent but moving. Why the massive feet on the stick-like figures? Because, Kramer argues:

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> They affirm a principle of gravity that, for the maker of sculptural objects, is perhaps the only perfectly knowable thing . . . everything else being hostage to the subversive vagaries of the subjective mind. The place where the figure meets the earth was, for Giacometti, the only still point in a turning world; and it was at that point that sculpture—as he understood it—was required to begin again and again and again.
>
> To build upon that isolated point of fixity was what Giacometti was "trying to do," and it . . . made him a "conservative" in the art of his time.

(If you don't mind Kramer's hubris in calling his magazine the *New Criterion*, you won't mind the absence of quotation marks around Eliot's "still point of the turning world.")

KRAMER can also be dangerous to meritorious painters with exaggerated reputations. One hears the familiar thrashing and puffing in the thicket as he creeps up on Morris Louis and levels the elephant gun:

> The crux of the experience we take away from these pictures [is] the experience of color, ravishing to the eye, as it is conceived by a mind in thrall to the very technique that yielded so many small perfections. Morris Louis was not the first modern artist to discover that by jettisoning a great many of the traditional resources of painting, something small and perfect might be achieved with what remained. But it *was* something small, and it is a mockery of great art—or a convenient amnesia—to claim otherwise.

And on the really overblown, like Barnett Newman or the insufferably bombastic Clyfford Still, whose 1979 show at the Metropolitan was so remarkable a collapse of curatorial spine, he can be deadly:

> It naturally had to be the largest exhibition ever devoted to the work of a living artist by that institution. And it was Still, of course, who selected the show, which came mostly out of his own storerooms; and it was he who wrote his own catalog and otherwise acted as his own curator. Such favor is never won on the basis of esthetic merit alone. No doubt his often-professed detestation of the ways of the art world was genuine, but Still played upon the susceptibilities of that world like Horowitz at a keyboard. In the end the art world had nothing to teach him about getting ahead.

Kramer is not very good at description. His efforts to convey the plastic, visual density of a given work are fairly dry. For a critic who places such stress on authenticity of feeling, this is a disadvantage. He gets less articulate feeling for the visual into 2,000 words on, say, Pierre Bonnard than John Updike can put into 200 words on a suburban housewife's pubic hair. He is more comfortable with injunctions, but these verge at times on parody—he actually writes leads like "Perhaps the best way to understand an artist like [Richard] Diebenkorn is to re-read T. S. Eliot's essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. . ."

ON HIS favorite subject, the Decline of the West, he tends to write with a mixture of indignation and circularity—the *echt* tone of neo-con complaint. His basic maneuver is simple: to define his terms in such a way as to exclude whatever offends his beliefs. This enables him to make remarkably cut-and-dried, sheep-and-goats decisions as to what are, and are not, the true thaumaturgic relics of modernism and thus, by inference, of High Culture. In this way we learn what is serious and what is frivolous; what can be revived (African tribal art in 1905) and what cannot (Bouguereau in 1975); what is worth talking about, and what can simply be pitched into the great Gehenna of Camp, the Sheol of Pseudo-Radicalism, where an undifferentiated mass of everyone and everything that has incited Kramer's displeasure, from Hudson River paintings to Susan Sontag, from rock music to Andy Warhol's wig, from Marcel Duchamp to T. J. Clark, lies bubbling and stinking.

To put it mildly, his view of modernism is rigid, messianic, and easily taught. It goes as follows. Around 1880 Western painting and sculpture, especially in the institutional forms through which they were presented to the middle classes (the Salon in France, the Royal Academy in England), had been utterly debased by popular taste. Languishing in the exile of kitsch, they were delivered from this unseemly bondage by three great leaders, Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso. This liberation did not mean anarchy (as *pompier* conservatives claimed at the time) or even a sudden rush of experimental freedom (as professional avant-gardists, a dwindling band, still claim). On the contrary, it was a return to "rigor," "seriousness," "constraints," and "strict esthetic probity," to take only four of the phrases that Kramer is apt to brandish as though he, too, had recently invented the disciplines they connote.

Nobody said modernism was meant to be easy. It was the stern Messiah, not the yelling shitting baby, of culture. And precisely because its demands were not easy, the messianic pattern was fulfilled by the appearance of various pop-up Antichrists and deluded (if gifted) evangelists, insisting in their clamorous tongues that modernism had disruptive or even political uses: German dadaists, French surrealists, Russian constructivists, and expressionists of every stripe, spilling their guts on the table, mucking up discourse and promising factitious utopias. Kramer is glad to accept and extol those elements of their work that accord with, or even derive from, Apollonian modernism. He dislikes expressionist hysteria and rejection, while approving its restoration of "feeling." He can approve the Dutch constructivists' hope for a utopia based on metaphysical rather than political plans: "In a century that has been riddled with poisonous ideologies and repugnant visions, what a clean sweet smell this particular movement has left behind, even for those who remain sceptical of its claims!" He sees no point in posthumously stomping Madame Blavatsky or Rudolf Steiner, whose batty ideas about universal harmony, as taken up by Mondrian and Kandinsky, did more to influence the content and course of abstract art than all the established churches put together. But when a *political* utopia fails, Kramer is in there with hobnails on. He has only one thing to say to its artists: *See? Didn't I tell you?*

THE FAILURE of modernist art and architecture to reform any society, despite the renewal programs set forth by their makers, is one of the commonplaces of our century. The trouble is that one can spend so much time poking fun at, say, Corbusier's failed hope to produce a better kind of worker that one scants his actual achievement, which was to produce a better kind of building. No artist could stand between Stalin and his nearly 19 million dead. All the protest art of the sixties and seventies could not save a single Cambodian from Nixon and Kissinger, let alone from Pol Pot. Works of visual art neither save nor kill; if Joseph Thorak and Arno Breker had not made their soapy colossi for Hitler, the death toll of non-Aryans would have been the same, though Albert Speer's architecture may be a different matter. What really counts, in the world of ideological influence, is mass media—film and print in the thirties, TV

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today. This is the century in which painting and sculpture lost their power to administrate social dreaming. Yet there is no doubt that works of art can open the individual mind to social dissent, and there is something grating and mean-spirited about Kramer's attempts to deny that this can have any value at all.

Kramer's avowed quarry is postmodernism and its discontents. In explaining the shifts of taste and aesthetic responsibility that produced this weasel word, he gets it a bit less than half right. Why did the absolute institutional authority achieved in the sixties by High Modernism—roughly, "mainstream" painting from Seurat and Cézanne, through cubism, constructivism, and on to abstract expressionism—seem to vanish into the sand by the end of the seventies? What produced the revivals of discredited and ignored bourgeois styles—the refenestration, as it were, of Landseer and story-painting and the Hudson River School, of French *pompier* art and Beaux-Arts architecture, Pre-Raphaelites and Nazarenes and minor Symbolists, of Gallé glass, Cassandre posters, Mucha prints, Mackintosh chairs, Wiener Werkstätte silverware, Dunand lacquer, Jean-Michel Frank interiors? Why, in short, was so much more of the art and design of the last 150 years suddenly deemed museologically acceptable? Kramer's answer is simple. It was camp taste, bored and alienated by the high stringencies of modernism, revolting against its institutional clout. "In our museums everything from Salon painting to the inanities of kitsch has been dusted off, freshly labeled, and solemnly placed on exhibition, almost as if the modern movement had never altered our view of them." That this "alteration" should itself remain unaltered seems a project dear to Kramer's heart. It is as though history (or at least the history of taste) reached its permanent climax around 1960. For an anti-Marxist, Kramer is quite the millenarian.

Modernism, then, has been betrayed from inside: its curatorial and critical watchmen, drugged out in the sixties and asleep in the seventies, allowed the gates of the citadel to be overrun by "cultured" barbarians, the vengeful philistines of his title. These philistines are a new breed, sired by modernism on popular culture. They are not the old-style, know-nothing Tories of the twenties or fifties, intent on discrediting Picasso or Matisse. That is what makes them so insidious—they feel they can enjoy Picasso and Matisse *and* other lesser things. This offends Kramer's sense of hierarchy. Their motto was written by Susan Sontag, in *Notes on Camp* (1964):

> Ordinarily we value a work of art because of the seriousness and dignity of what it achieves. But there are other creative sensibilities besides the seriousness (both tragic and comic) of high culture. . . . And one cheats oneself, as a human being, if one has *respect* only for the style of high culture, whatever else one may feel or do on the sly.

These moderate and sensible words strike Kramer as sinister: they imply a "relaxation" of modernist tension.

One gets the impression that Sontag, his *bête noire*, is to blame for everything that went wrong in the seventies and eighties. With his jaws locked on her leg, Kramer does not see the more realistic explanation. Simply put, all this stuff was revived for two reasons—historical curiosity and the suction of a colossally expanded art market. When you run out of Masaccios, you sell Bronzinos; when Florentine mannerist painting is picked clean, you move to the Bolognese seicento; and so on down the line, to the detested *pompiers*. The market runs on re-

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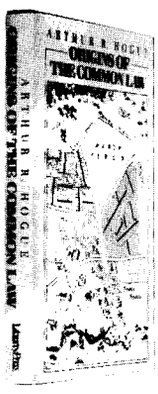

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By Arthur R. Hogue

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discovery. It craves product. So does the surplus of museums, seeking to fill their exhibition schedules, and the surplus of scholars, hunting for fresh subjects.

By no means everything that has been exhumed in this way is as contemptible or peripheral as Kramer makes out. By the same token, the market project of contemporary postmodernism is to sell nominally avant-gardist kitsch to a class of American collectors swollen to a hundred times its old size. This can best be done by wielding the language of "renewals," "advances," and "breakthroughs," a dry crust of market clichés that nonetheless evokes Pavlovian reflexes in the neophyte. Kramer loathes kitsch so much that he will neither analyze it nor admit its sources in the free-market capitalism he admires. He would rather blame it all on camp "subversion," the loss of that siege mentality that he places (mistakenly, I think) at the core of modernist seriousness. And while he rightly notes that the eighties have released a spate of frivolous, pretentious, and decadent art (for proof, consult the East Village, or the last Whitney Biennial), Kramer is not totally immune to its charms. He appears, for instance, to take Julian Schnabel's bombast seriously.

THERE ARE ALSO times when, in his zealous defense of the hierarchies, Kramer presents as his own invention things that have been said for years, and truculently defies conventions that no longer exist. A case in point is Pierre Bonnard. Kramer argues that Bonnard has long been underrated because art writers are too fixed on intentions and programs, at the expense of sensuousness and pictorial intensity. He did not fit the orthodoxies of art-world radicalism—unlike, for instance, Marcel Duchamp. In a 1984 review Kramer quotes a spiteful obit on Bonnard, written by some flunky of Picasso in 1947, calling him merely "facile and agreeable." "It was probably inevitable," Kramer adds, "that we would have to wait until Cubism . . . had quit the cultural stage before Bonnard would come to be recognized as the master he is. That moment seems at last to have arrived." Yet some 35 years before, and at intervals through the fifties, Patrick Heron (whose essays Kramer used to publish in *Arts Magazine*) argued most eloquently that Bonnard's influence on younger artists, by the late forties, had already surpassed Picasso's, and that he was to be placed among the Big Four of modernism since Cézanne. By the time of the Royal Academy's great Bonnard retrospective in 1966, virtually every European and English critic took this as settled. To suggest that Bonnard's achievement waited for Kramer to unveil it in the eighties is either amnesiac or American-provincial. More likely, it is a bit of both.

THEN there are the Kramer vendettas, during which the mask of Johnsonian weight slips and reveals a *yenta*. One gets the tone in his sneers at R. B. Kitaj, whose elaborate web of pictorial reference to the catastrophic entwining of Jewish, German, and Russian history happens to be one of the few intelligent efforts at history-painting in our time. Kitaj's work is by no means as hermetic as Kramer says, and it soon opens to a sympathetic reading; but in any case, the one thing it is *not* is the pictorial prattle of a falsely nostalgic lefty, and that is exactly what Kramer makes it out to be—"the unexamined cultural pieties of an American intellectual of the *Partisan Review* period given a very facile graphic form."

The right, it seems, has "convictions" and "aims"; the left has "pieties" and "agendas." The same old ducks come up in his shooting gallery, over and over again. If Writer A rejects Marxism, he or she shows a commendable evolution; if Susan Sontag speaks out against Soviet tyranny, it can only be opportunism. And how many more times do we have to hear from Kramer about the foolish pseudo-existentialist remarks Harold Rosenberg made on "Action Painting" some 35 years ago, as though these, and not the cogent, penetrating essays he wrote in the sixties and seventies, made up his intellectual legacy? Kramer has always had a sharp demystifying eye for star artists' pretensions to scourge their only audience, the bourgeoisie. In the seventies he was the first American critic trenchantly to show what intellectual slackness lay in the now-dead words "avant-garde"; he killed this old military metaphor. Yet the red-eyed vigilance with which he pursues artists for their "radical" associations is bizarre. The extreme case in this anthology is Charles Simonds, whose miniature sculptures of mud villages and mock-archaeological sites evoke five whole pages of stilted ironizing about cultural regression, topped off with the warning that their implications for American cultural life are "dreadfully creepy." Why is this poor butterfly on such a wheel? Apparently because—though Kramer does not say so—at the time of the review (1981) Simonds was living with the only critic Kramer detests more than Susan Sontag, the Marxist-feminist activist Lucy Lippard.

WHERE ART and politics bump into one another on the American stage, Kramer becomes a virtuoso of overkill. Let the New Museum put on a show called "Art and Ideology"—stuffed with works so banal or impenetrable that their appeal as propaganda is close to zero—and he goes into his war dance about cultural Stalinism, "so-called activists," "a dedicated and well-organized minority faction," "ideological straitjackets," and the "very bad news indeed" that the New Museum gets grants and has become a "power in the art world." On the one hand he ridicules as airy the political hopes of early modernism. On the other he seems to believe that new attempts at left political statement in art can corrupt the American polity today. This, by my reading, is waffle. The truth is that the life of American art is refracted through institutions so thoroughly centrist or conservative, so fully aligned with the interests of capitalism, so grounded in the maintenance of consensus as against the fictions of "revolution," that the far left has no more effect on it than graffiti on a pyramid. But because the graffiti are at eye level, Kramer magnifies their significance. Moreover, he has only one translation for them: *Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*. If this is what resistance to "intellectual fashion" means, we may indeed be in worse trouble than we think.

But "fashion," in Kramerese, suggests the Cities of the Plain. As a Red lurks under each bed in the palace, and a structuralist or deconstructionist gibbers behind each arras, so the Long Gallery is full of—well, the other sort of people Norman Podhoretz and Midge Decter don't like. Kramer despises such folk and writes of "the homosexual's recognition that his condition represents a kind of joke on nature." Since the joke is one of the few in his repertoire, he tells it fairly often. Thus Grant Wood, the regionalist painter of largely factitious Iowan rural idylls—and a closet case if ever there was one—receives the inexorable tusk: "One has the impression," Kramer harrumphs, after noting Wood's late and unenthusiastic marriage, his indifference to manly farm labor, his remoteness

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from Pa and his fixation on Mom, "that women were never much in Grant Wood's line ... however, he liked to dress up as his father, so to speak." One is left in no doubt that Wood's defects as a painter—and most of the time he was a superficial one—issue from the joke in his genes.

But surely there are matters of interest to be got from an analysis, not a mere denunciation, of Wood's sublimations; of how they may have denatured his art and led to its relentless populist idealizing of country matters; of why these idealizations were so popular with the American public from the Depression onward, and so heavily promoted as "truth" by such as Henry Luce. At such moments one realizes that Kramer, far from being the free knight on the ramparts, is rather trapped by his scenario of a Manichaean struggle between Art and Kitsch for the control of Culture. The idea of an absolute, irreconcilable standoff between "high" and "popular" culture is obsolete and can hardly even be restored as an issue. The dialogue between the two has been so much the subject of modernism itself, in the decades since Picasso put newspapers in collage and Eliot patched the Shakespeherian Rag into *The Waste Land*, that apartheid will not work. Or if it seems to, it can do so only at the expense of one of the art critic's necessary tasks—to describe the way images actually work, as distinct from the way they once worked or "ought" to work, in his society. To evoke this the critic needs all his instruments—woodwinds, brass, strings, and percussion—but he is bound to miss a few nuances if his performance, like Kramer's, so often turns into a solo on the fire bell.

ROBERT HUGHES

Robert Hughes is the art critic for *Time* magazine. His new book, *The Fatal Shore*, a study of the founding of Australia as a penal colony, will be published by Knopf in the fall.

A WAY TO SAVE WELFARE

Beyond Entitlement: The Social Obligations of Citizenship by Lawrence M. Mead

(The Free Press, 318 pp., $19.95)

The most memorable theme in Mario Cuomo's remarkable speech before the 1984 Democratic Convention was that of "family" and family values. He closed the speech by describing his father, "a small man with thick calluses on both his hands" who worked "15 and 16 hours a day," his feet sometimes bleeding, in order to "live in dignity" so that someday his son might "occupy the highest seat in the greatest state in the greatest nation in the only world we know."

But in the body of the speech he had spoken of another family, the "family of America." The soft echoes of a Catholic education could be heard as he invoked

> a single, fundamental idea that describes better than most textbooks, and any speech, what a proper government should be. The idea of family, mutuality, the sharing of benefits and burdens for the good of all: feeling one another's pain; sharing one another's blessings reasonably, honestly, fairly....

The cardinal virtue of this family is not "faith and hard work," but compassion. "We believe," he said, "in a government strong enough to use words like love and compassion.... the failure anywhere to provide what reasonably we might, to avoid pain, is our failure."

Only on reading the speech does one detect the paradox of using the family as a model for politics while implicitly contrasting the working private family with the compassionate public "family." The impact of Cuomo's performance testifies to the resonance these terms have in our political discourse today, and also to their irreconcilability in practice. Just what do family, work, and compassion have to do with politics?

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this question. This is a book especially for Democrats who wish to defend the welfare state but find themselves struck dumb by the charges leveled against it by Charles Murray, Ken Auletta, and George Gilder. Mead's writing may lack the authority of Murray's *Losing Ground*, the intimacy of Auletta's *The Underclass*, the mystic energy of Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty*, and he adds little to their assessments of the social condition of the dependent classes today. But his book is potentially more important because Mead understands that it is the political, not the economic, structure of the welfare state that today needs reexamination and restoration—specifically, the relation between citizenship and work.

MEAD'S argument is simple: "the main problem with the welfare state is its *permissiveness*, not its size." He does not offer dramatic graphs matching the rise in welfare benefits to increases in social pathologies—illegitimate births, crime, dropouts, unemployment—but chooses instead to examine the decline in "obligations" placed on recipients over the past 25 years. And he moves beyond the single-minded focus on Aid to Families with Dependent Children to consider other important programs that have severed the connection between work and independence—including (to my surprise) programs that would seem to cover only the unemployable (disability insurance), and those that explicitly seek to encourage employment (the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, the Work Incentive Program, food stamps).

Our confusions begin in our being misled by the language of economics to think of social programs as "transfers" that simply move money from hand to hand without affecting the political status of those involved. Of course, welfare programs (and the tax system, too) do more than push cash around. They also encourage or discourage, condone or ignore, different modes of private behavior through benefits and requirements. And this "structure of benefits and requirements," Mead insists, "constitutes an *operational definition of citizenship*." It tells us what minimum standard of "private competence" is required for "public action" to be carried out. FDR, who never spoke of "income transfers," surely thought of the New Deal as public action meant to restore "one-third of a nation" to citizenship. What may not have occurred to the New Dealers, and what has certainly been ignored by most Democrats since FDR, is that the private competence presumed by the structure of the welfare state reflects our notion of citizenship as much as the structure itself does. Rejecting a social security system based solely on need in favor of one that loosely ties benefits to work and contributions reflected some of our deepest beliefs about citizenship and private behavior—in this case, work. And those beliefs, when expressed in program structure, have in turn affected recipients' behavior.

This connection between program "obligations" (to use Mead's term) and benefit entitlements was lost in the Great Society, as recipients' behavior ceased to be a matter of polite discussion. Perhaps more important than the rise of benefits in the 1960s was the change in eligibility requirements: disability and unemployment benefits became easier to extend, residency requirements were reduced, recipients could challenge payment cutoffs, work requirements went unenforced, social workers stopped looking under beds. While Mead does not give a full account of these changes (the central role of the courts is mostly ignored), he does succeed in capturing the radical transformation in ethos that affected all branches of government, intellectuals, and most important, the recipients themselves. If society is responsible for poverty, either structurally or through bad economic policy, it follows that authoritative obligations "blame the victim" or "regulate the poor"—even those obligations that might restore self-sufficiency and the quality of community life.

MUCH OF this seems familiar, especially now that more states are experimenting with workfare as a way of reducing the rolls. Mead's contribution is less in offering evidence for or against particular workfare strategies than in providing the first coherent intellectual framework for thinking about the work issue in the current welfare debate. Mead manages to restore the old moral debate over work and welfare without moralizing, since his foremost concern is that the dependent classes are becoming "less free and equal" as they drift further toward the fringes of mainstream social life. Making program benefits—in AFDC, unemployment insurance, food stamps—dependent on behavior would place recipients in the same position in which other citizens find themselves, that of living with some of the consequences of their actions. "The great merit of equal citizenship as a social goal," he writes, "is that it is much more widely achievable than status. It is not competitive. . . . It requires only that everyone discharge the common obligations, including social ones like work."

Is it possible to restore program obligations in the welfare state today? Mead has been investigating this question for the past few years in a study of the federal Work Incentive Program (WIN) as it operates in New York State. WIN, which in 1967 was given the task of finding employment for AFDC recipients, has not been successful overall, but Mead was interested in learning why certain WIN offices were more successful than others. What he discovered is that offices that placed the largest proportion of recipients in jobs were those whose employees felt that recipients had a social obligation to work, that jobs were available, and that WIN had legitimate authority to make people take them. The actual availability of local jobs and day care was less important than this authoritative ethos—an ethos, it should be noted, that local offices often had to maintain against a permissive, disapproving Washington bureaucracy.

IF THE book has a consistent weakness, it is Mead's failure to specify the precise work requirements he would like to see in each program, and his shifting definition of what would constitute "success." At one point success seems to be a gradual dimunition of the rolls, at another the political enfranchisement of those who remain. I find him more persuasive on the latter, political question, for by now we have all learned to lower our expectations for immediate, radical changes in the welfare population. When Mead writes that, with strict work requirements, "the category of potentially competent, uninstitutionalized, yet nonfunctional adult that today dominates welfare would, over time, disappear," I am uncomfortably reminded of Milton Friedman explaining how monetarism would, by definition, end inflation overnight. Of course work requirements would take some people off the dole; some would find it more attractive to work, others would lose benefits for failing to take work. But since, as Mead himself points out, program implementation will determine how strong these effects are, he is

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on much firmer ground discussing a change in political ethos than predicting reductions in the recipient population.

THE political issue, however, has never really been whether current recipients could do *any* work. Most could. It has been whether the state must be responsible for finding them *appropriate* work, and day care. The controversy surrounding President Nixon's (and Daniel Patrick Moynihan's) Family Assistance Plan in the early 1970s, for example, which seemed to be a debate over benefits, was actually a debate over work and human dignity. The best parts of Mead's book are those that re-create this and similar debates that took place in Congress over the past two decades, not between liberals and conservatives, but between the permissive elements of right and left and those whom Mead calls "civic conservatives."

The permissive party was able to hold together its bipartisan coalition because all members agreed, for different reasons, that work should not be a precondition for receiving public assistance. Libertarian impulses and a general indifference to social policy made the right surprisingly insensitive to the work issue. Typical was conservative Representative John Rarick's comment that "the solution to the welfare mess is to return to the Holy Bible and to the Constitution"; as Mead puts it, the right "would rather cut programs than *use* them for conservative ends." Liberal Democrats, on the other hand, were simply paralyzed by the fear of appearing to hold recipients responsible for improving their condition. So while the Democratic Party argued evermore forcefully in the early 1970s that women lacked dignity unless they could control their family size and leave home to work—and as more women were doing just that—it also found itself in the odd position of opposing as inhumane those plans requiring welfare mothers to work, or discouraging them from having additional children. Liberal Democrats found it difficult to support work requirements when minority and church groups uniformly opposed them. (Presbyterian ministers, for example, insisted that the recipients must have "the freedom to choose how they may express the meaning of their lives.")

Standing against this peculiar right/left coalition were Mead's "civic conservatives"—led by Wilbur Mills, Russell Long, and most especially, Martha Griffiths (Democrats all)—who wanted to make welfare programs as generous as possible, on the condition that work requirements be strongly enforced. Their view was that holding any job—yes, *any* job—was more dignified than simply living on the dole. The civic conservatives thought utopian those policies aimed at preparing recipients for middle-class lives and "careers" rather than for a solid place in the lower working class. They knew, as Mead writes, that "the underclass cannot be made middle-class in a single generation," but unlike some of their more refined colleagues, saw nothing wrong with their becoming working class. Any job today is preferable to holding out for "real" and "meaningful" jobs tomorrow. Martha Griffiths was especially allergic to the language of those testifying before her, and when the word "need" was casually used she exploded:

> The theory of comparing what is given in welfare with what is needed is foolish. "What is needed" is a phony standard set up by a paternalistic middle class. The real standard is what similar people earn, and how they are treated.

No doubt speaking for her working-class Michigan constituents, she chided those who felt recipients should not be obliged to take menial jobs when "menial" also applied to "every job for every woman in America, and for a very large number of men." She was not squeamish about ordinary labor, and neither was Russell Long, who defended work rules as offering the "dignity, self-worth, and confidence which will flow from being recognized as a wage-earning member of society."

THE civic conservatives were never able to turn the tide in welfare policy-making, though Mead believes that they do represent an underlying social consensus on the work/welfare issue, a consensus reflected in the public's seemingly confused views on social policy. Why, he asks, do surveys consistently show that Americans are committed to the welfare state when they are asked about specific programs—Social Security, Medicare—but are highly critical of anything called "welfare"? The answer is not to be found in making a jesuitical distinction between the truly and the not really needy, but rather in the connection people make between benefits and obligations, a connection they believe is not enforced by "welfare." "Welfare is unpopular," Mead writes, "because it

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satisfies only half the public mind. To eliminate welfare would satisfy only the other half."

So Americans are committed to the welfare state, though to a far more "muscular" version than the one they are currently offered by either party. Cutting benefits will not restore that muscularity if the remaining programs continue to erode the "family values" of work and responsibility that other citizens take for granted among themselves. The political symbolism is as important as the results: even if the moderate, non-obligatory workfare experiments taking place in several states today do not have immediate, dramatic effects on the rolls, they cannot help but be tremendously popular with ordinary voters.

And those ordinary voters are potential Democrats who, whether blue or "new" collar, share an almost religious attachment to the idea of work. The "public family" idea, on the other hand, will fail them because it misreads the complicated relation they see between public and private life. Americans do not want a political "family": they don't want to be treated like children, and they don't want an elected paterfamilias. In politics they demand that every citizen be treated equally and be protected against misfortune, and that every citizen fulfill his public obligations. The entitlements and obligations of family life are different—brotherhood and compassion, work and self-sacrifice—yet they complement public life by preparing us to act as free citizens. It is only when the family lacks self-sufficiency, and free citizenship is thereby threatened, that private life becomes a public concern. The entitlement to assistance and the obligations to work and behave responsibly then lose their familial character and become political entitlements and obligations. There is no "family of America," just families in America.

MARK LILLA

Mark Lilla, associate editor of the *Public Interest*, is a doctoral candidate in government at Harvard.

A PASSAGE FROM INDIA

Darkness
by Bharati Mukherjee

(Penguin, 199 pp., $5.95)

In the introduction to Bharati Mukherjee's first collection of short stories, she makes the interesting observation that the book she dreams of updating is no longer *A Passage to India*, but *Call it Sleep*. The stories that follow do indeed treat the classical theme of diaspora—of exile and emigration, of all the acts of courage and will required by the experience, all the traumas and ironies and failures of it. But Mukherjee's diaspora will not be completely familiar to most readers. This is Henry Roth with a subcontinental twist.

Some of the finest writing in England in recent years has been fiction by or about immigrants from the subcontinent. In America, where there is a substantial community of such people, there has been far less interest in them. The critical success here of Stephen Frears's *My Beautiful Laundrette*, a film about Pakistanis in London, may help to remedy this situation. And so might the prose of Bharati Mukherjee. Her stories are populated by Indian and Pakistani immigrants, new inhabitants of a tense, hostile Canada and a flat, urgent America. Her people rarely lose sight of what she calls, very rightly, their "not-quiteness." They bring with them the psychic extremes and historical turmoil of India's present and past. They crave success and stability in their adopted homes, yet are torn by the consequences of their new identities. The discomfiting tales in *Darkness* are about building new lives with old materials; their settings may seem simple, but the emotional landscape they describe is not.

Mukherjee writes in many voices. She is a child, a young woman, an old man; a Moslem, a Hindu, a Sikh; a rich doctor, an illegal waiter. She comes from India, from Pakistan, from Bangladesh. She observes the immigrant family struggling to overcome racism and the other forms of social distance, while trying at the same time to work out compromises between the powerful traditional culture of its origins and and the mores of its new home. The compromises are not always successful; and so her stories almost always seem to turn on misunderstandings and mistaken assumptions, on confused attempts to cope, on chaotic and often brutal responses. Mukherjee's work is riddled with mixed affairs and mixed marriages that don't exactly work, with unions arranged in India that are stretched to the seams in America, with the confused children of such unions. And the children, in her account, seem doubly lost, pulled between a strong, magical past that they have themselves barely known and the strange, seductive reality of America.

MR. Bhowmick, in "A Father," is a Detroit businessman. Like all the other middle-class Indian professionals in these tales, he is very punctual—something "not-quites" should be sure to be. In his spare time he has studied Woodworking I and II, and built a grotto for the goddess Kali in his home. Mr. Bhowmick has vivid dreams, whose contents he is embarrassed to disclose to his more Americanized wife and daughter. He is disturbed by "invisible presences: gods and snakes frolicked in the master bedroom, little white sparks of cosmic static crackled up the legs of his pajamas." One morning he notices that Kali's tongue looks astonishingly "scarlet and saucy"; and shortly thereafter Mr. Bhowmick discovers that Babli, his unmarried daughter, an electrical engineer who refers to her parents' religion as "this Hindu myth stuff . . . like a series of super graphics," is pregnant.

First he panics. Then he responds, he feels, quite progressively—he worries about the identity of the baby's father, but he is looking forward to a grandchild. The story follows Mr. Bhowmick's own musings until he discovers that his daughter has had herself artificially inseminated, an act she hysterically compares to her parents' Indian-style marriage of matching "like livestock. . . . Matching bloodlines, matching horoscopes, matching castes." The good burgher Bhowmick begins to beat his daughter's abdomen with a rolling pin.

Dr. Manny Patel, in "Nostalgia," is a psychiatrist working at a state mental hospital in Queens. He drives a red

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Porsche and voted for Reagan. He is married to Camille, a liberal American who boycotts South African wines and nonunion lettuce. His son attends Andover. Dr. Patel feels himself "not an expatriate but a patriot." Driving into Manhattan, however, he is overcome with nostalgia, and in a haze of homesickness is smitten by Padma, an attractive Indian salesgirl. He asks her out (which, by Indian standards, is not done) and she accepts (which also is not done). Dr. Patel knows that he is breaking the rules, but he is hungry for Padma's Indianness. He takes her to dinner, and then to bed. Soon he discovers that he has been conned by an Indian uncle/niece/pimp/whore team. They extort money from him, and a physician's note to assist in the immigration problems of the "uncle's" family. In a shocking scatological response to his humiliation, the enlightened psychiatrist Dr. Patel enters the hotel bathroom, squats on the sink as he might have done in his father's village, angrily defecates, and takes his "hot, light, porous" shit in his hands and writes "Whore" across the bathroom mirror. Then he drives home to Camille in New Jersey.

Obviously Mukherjee is not a sentimental writer; "Nostalgia" is about the perverse price of nostalgia in a new world. She never embellishes the past, nor does she pretend that her characters are purely the victims of another culture or another society. Still, the racism encountered by the Indians remains an overwhelming condition of their lives. Its emotional and physical havoc is particularly vivid in the stories set in Canada. Mukherjee says in her introduction that in Canada she was "frequently taken for a prostitute or shoplifter, frequently assumed to be a domestic, praised by astonished auditors that I didn't have a 'sing-song' accent." Her Canadian stories swing between dark outbursts and silence, as the immigrants continue to suffer discrimination and abuse. (Bumper stickers, for example, read "Keep Canada Green. Paint a Paki.")

In a dingy Indian restaurant in "Tamurlane" sits Gupta, a mysteriously silent, crippled tandoor chef who once was thrown onto the subway tracks by Canadian racists. The story tells of a raid on illegals at the restaurant. As the rest of the staff is dragged out of hiding, the chef orders the Mounties to leave. When they try instead to take him, Gupta grabs a cleaver and slashes a Mountie's arm. Then he pulls out his Canadian passport—it is the proof of his legitimacy—and holds it defiantly in front of his face. "That way," the story fatalistically ends, "he never saw the drawn gun, nor did he try to dodge the single bullet."

Many of these tales of immigration have strange twists to them. Mukherjee skillfully mixes history with fantasy, real violence with felt violence, the seeming straightforwardness of American life with the continuing tussle with themselves that inevitably characterizes such divided people. All this accounts for the tension, the strong tone of volatility, that runs through her prose. Explosions seem to lie in wait everywhere. Mukherjee brilliantly records the commingling of public history with private life—for instance, in "Angela," where the savagery of the war in Bangladesh is chillingly mixed up with the sexual coming-of-age of a young woman.

Angela is an orphaned Bangladeshi Christian who has been adopted by an American family in Van Buren County. The grateful girl behaves normally; she sits at the bedside of her "sister" Delia (in a coma after a car accident), she joins in the Sunday ritual of family meals after church, she is a member of the school

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cheerleading team. But quietly, all the while, she remains caged by her history. In fact she has been physically disfigured by it. Her nipples were cut off, her body scarred, by bayonets—she was a child left for dead in the war. Now Angela is courted by a distasteful, successful Indian doctor from Goa. As he strokes her and touches her ("Only a doctor could love this body," she thinks), as he tells her that in America she is expected to "fly the coop," finally as he suggests that she marry him, Angela is tortured by an image of leeches: "Leeches, I can feel leeches gorging on the blood of my breasts." The catastrophe so far away and long ago remains at the heart of her world in Van Buren County.

And yet in Mukherjee's hard world there is also transcendence. Sometimes the difficulties of the new world are countered by elaborate mysteries woven by its new inhabitants. Escape proves possible by means of the imagination—of an imagination excited by the magical and the mystical. So many of Mukherjee's people are nourished by secret dreams, exaltations, and adventures. Some of her most unforgettable stories are about transfiguration.

"Saints," a perfect little story, tells of a young boy's flight from pain into a kind of triumphant Hindu indifference. The tale documents the increasing estrangement of 15-year-old Shawn Patel, and his lucky discovery of a secret for invulnerability to reality. Shawn is the son of divorced parents—one Indian, one American. (His father is the Dr. Patel of "Nostalgia.") He lives with his mother in upstate New York, receiving the occasional phone call or lavish gift from his father, observing the lurid advances of his mother's lover, growing more and more alienated from his surroundings. One day Shawn's father sends him a present. It is a book about the visions of a Hindu saint. It tells of the saint thinking about his love for a temple boy—at which point the saint falls and breaks his arm. "Love and pain: in the saint's mind there is no separation." Shawn sets out to imitate the drastic detachment of the holy man. He walks about on his own, at night, "in a state of perfect grace." Finally, in an attempt to effect a physical translation to the saintly state, he dons his mother's clothes and paints his face. "How wondrous to be a visionary," he tells his mother, as she screams and sobs at the sight of her son. "If I were to touch someone now, I'd be touching god." (The story is reminiscent of the transfiguration of Henry Roth's young hero David, prompted by a passage of Hebrew scripture.)

Mukherjee's style is a combination of narrative straightforwardness and unexpected invention, of naturalism and the uncanny. Her book's dedication to Bernard Malamud makes sense, though

THE UNCREATION

The crowd at the ballpark sing, the cantor sings
Kol Nidre, and the equipment in our cars
Fills them with singing voices while we drive.

When the warlord hears his enemy is dead,
He sings his praises. The veterans sang a song
And we protesters sang a song against them,

Like teams of children in a singing game;
And at the great convention all they did
They punctuated with a song: our breath

Which is an element and so a quarter
Of all creation, heated and thrown out
With all the body's force to shake our ears.

Everything said has its little secret song,
Strained higher and lower as talking we sing all day,
The sentences turned and tinted by the body:

A tune of certain pitch for questions, a tune
For *that was not a question*, a tune for *was it*,
The little tunes of begging, of coolness, of scolding.

The Mudheads dance in their adobe masks
From house to house, and sing at each the misdeeds
Of the small children inside. And we must take you,

They sing, Now we must take you, Now we must take
You back to the house of Mud. But then the parents
With presents for the Mudheads in their arms

Come singing each child's name, and buy him back:
Forgive him, give him back, we'll give you presents.
And the prancing Mudheads take the bribes, and sing.

I make a feeble song up while I work,
And sometimes even machines may chant or jingle
Some lyrical accident that takes its place

In the great excess of song that coats the world.
But after the flood the bland Immortals will come
As holy tourists to our sunken world,

To slide like sunbeams down shimmering layers of blue:
Artemis, Gog, Priapus, Jehovah and Baal,
With faces calmer than when we gave them names,

Walking our underwater streets where bones
And houses bloom fantastic spurts of coral,
Until they find our books. The pages softened

To a dense immobile pulp between the covers
Will rise at their touch in swelling plumes like smoke,
With a faint black gas of ink among the swirls,

And the golden beings shaping their mouths like bells
Will impel their breath against the weight of ocean
To sing us into the cold regard of water.

A girl sang dancing once, and shook her hair.
A young man fasting to have a powerful dream
Sang as he cut his body, to please a spirit.

But the Gods will sing entirely, the towering spumes
Dissolving around their faces will be the incense
Of their old anonymity restored

In a choral blast audible in the clouds,
An immense vibration that presses the very fish,
So through her mighty grin the whale will sing

To keep from bursting, and the tingling krill
Will sing in her jaws, the whole cold salty world
Humming oblation to what our mouths once made.

ROBERT PINSKY

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some of the humor and the parabolic quality of his writing is missing from hers. In places her style is almost too plain, too unsubtle, for all the violence and the visionary flight it contains. At times I found myself wanting a little more extravagance and a little more wizardry to be added to the realism of her American models. Yet Mukherjee has created some complicated inner lives, and evoked the sensations and the traditions and the combustion of two very different cultures. Unlike many writers about the immigrant experience, Mukherjee does not succumb to guilt or to maudlin memories about the past. Instead her work soberly celebrates resilience. Like most of her characters, she has no thoughts of turning back.

MAHNAZ ISPAHANI

Mahnaz Ispahani writes on the politics and culture of the subcontinent. She recently completed a study of the land routes of South and Central Asia.

MOVE OVER, SAMMY GLICK

Made in America
by Peter Ueberroth
with Richard Levin and Amy Quinn

(William Morrow, 401 pp., $17.95)

Peter Ueberroth's emergence as the all-American uebermensch dates back only two years, to the 1984 Olympics, but that has been time enough for him to hack out the obligatory autobiography cum campaign tract and enter the national peerage by becoming the commissioner of baseball. This ain't St. Augustine's *Confessions* we have here. No tortured admissions of vile and fleshy desires to peel the leotards off the breastless bodies of teenage gymnasts from the entrepreneurial hero who made a financial success of the last Olympics.

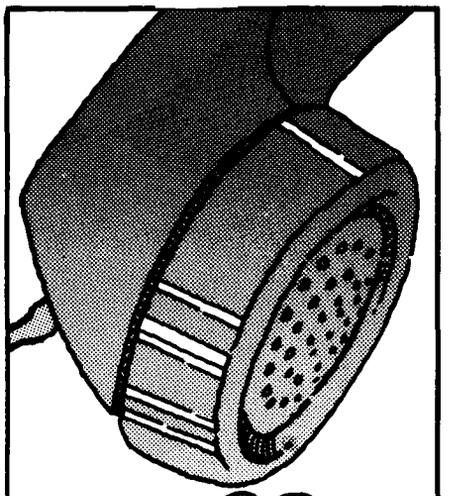
Made in America, typed into the word processor with the assistance of not one but two sworn enemies of the English language, is still another domestically manufactured product that would have been significantly better had it been written by two sushi slicers in Yokohama. People brought up by parents who taught them they must finish every book they start will put down these 401 pages of self-aggrandizing personal propaganda with scant knowledge of Ueberroth's character and personality but with a full description of how an American power figure wants himself presented to the public. This is of more than passing interest, since Ueberroth is now using his position as baseball's boss man to become, thanks to his disciplining of cocaine-sniffing athletes, the secular counterpart of the Pat Robertsons and Jerry Falwells in the drive to have big government, big religion, and big business act in loco parentis for the population at large.

In this he more resembles Robertson than Falwell, for Ueberroth personifies yuppie blandness and basic, homey values masking acquisitive toughness and businessmanic dedication to the bitch goddess. Like a Wasp Sammy Glick, Ueberroth goes for smooth nonce words like excellence and dialogue, and clothes career advancement in the mushy vocabularies of the caring and helping professions, and the new quasi-religious public morality—all without the beguiling crudities of a Lee Iacocca.

But the boy knows how to toot his horn:

> When I heard my name announced I walked to the microphone set on the huge, round stage in the middle of the field. The lights were so bright I couldn't really see. But I could hear, and it sounded like thunder. At first I didn't know what it was. [Don't you believe it.] It took a couple of seconds to sort out the sights and the sounds and to realize the crowd was on its feet, cheering for me. I choked up. I had to suppress an incredible urge to tell the world how much Ginny [the wifey] and my children, Vicki, Heidi, Keri and Joe, meant to me and how their love and support had enabled me to get through this long project.

Unhappily, the gentleman's will to suppress his incredible urges left him as soon as his collaborators plopped down



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in front of their PCs to tell how Peter, Free Market Magister Ludi, made the Olympics pay its way.

To what extent the 1984 Olympics did actually pay its way and to what extent the public payments to support the games were hidden by creative accounting is a secret that will go to the grave with the CPAs who handled the double-entry bookkeeping. But assuredly the nation's taxpayers had to shell out far less than they would have if the Olympics had been run with the Marcos-like profligacy that had become traditional with them. For this we might want to thank Ueberroth, had he not already used his book to do the job himself.

THE compliments having already been richly paid, there remains only to examine the man and symbol that are Ueberroth. Beyond being the chaste husband and father to any number of people with icky first names, we see in him the modern business type who makes his fortune in the airier sectors of the service economy. Contrast Pete's business success in travel agentry with the gruffer Lee Iacocca, who manufactures substantial stuff with doors you can slam and tires you can kick. Iacocca is particularly cherished for fear he may be the last of his kind as America becomes more dependent on foreign hardware than on foreign oil. Nobody doubts we can have as many Ueberroths as we want.

Iacocca may sell us necessities while the travel agent and sports impresario makes his money by filling our idle hours, but Peter Ueberroth reveals himself to be as tough, if not as gruff, as the other man in the automobile biz. "I learned long ago that if you're going to be in charge, then take charge," Peter and his two friends tell us. "Authority is 20 percent given—which was about all the [Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee] board had given me to date—and 80 percent taken. When you're in charge, you assume complete and total authority, and your decisions reduce everything else to mere record keeping and back-up functions." We have here the informal American executive, decked out in "complete and total authority," grinding his subordinates down to "mere record keeping and back-up functions." But he does it without clicks of the heel in the loose, first-name-basis, outdoor California style. Peter is true to the title of his autobiography, a Made in America man taking and using power in a Made in America way.

As Peter sees it, nothing short of his resolute use of power could have brought the Olympics to such a profitable conclusion in the face of the fools in the State Department, the fools in the Kremlin, the fools in the international Olympic hierarchy, and the other, lesser fools with whom he was forced to contend. Generally speaking, to win Ueberroth's praise your first name must end in an "i" or you must be assiduously energetic in carrying out your back-up functions or you must be richer, more powerful, or more famous than he. Peter likes the little people when they do what they're told, quickly. Subordinates who anticipate their orders make it easier for the boss to seem easygoing and collegial, the laid-back martinet.

This man of tieless, open-at-the-collar severity has, after all, made his name in sports, not games, despite what they call the Olympics, where Ueberroth had 100,000 people snapping flash cards into red, white, and blue patterns on command. Sports teach the demi-martial arts, how to be one of the marchers, how to get your jollies being a small person in someone else's big parade. Sports are different from games; games are sloppy activities at which we allow ourselves to have fun without having to aim at breaking records or attaining personal bests. Sports are when there's no gain without pain and settling for a tie is like kissing your sister. Sports are the economilitary paradigm that teaches young men and women the dedication, concentration, and commitment to compete and win. It's at the ball park and gym that we produce the young Americans who will lead the resurgence across the Pacific to plant the dollar sign atop Mount Fuji. Grenada was snatched back from communism by black men hardened on the cement basketball courts of Brooklyn and by white men bronzed in Santa Monica surf.

Since the Olympics, Peter has gone on in sports, but in a less laid-back style, to use baseball as the best-publicized example of how the private sector can supplement police and pulpit in stamping out drug use. Everybody employed in professional baseball on the field or in the front office is to submit to urine testing for illicit drug use. Major-league baseball players, not minor-league ones, have, thanks to the power of their union, been able to fend Ueberroth off somewhat on this one, but it looks as though the new national nanny, our number-one social disciplinarian, will prevail.

Ueberroth is aided in these endeavors by the President's Crime Commission, which wants every government and private-sector employee tested for drug use. The ACLU types are claiming this kind of thing is inherently unconstitutional, but nowhere in that hallowed document does the word urine appear. No, these orders probably aren't unconstitutional, but obeying them is certainly undignified. If you don't like it, well, after all, nobody's making you work here. Go put your body and your skills out on the free market for jobs, although with fewer and fewer and larger and larger corporations, the bidding for your services may be something less than brisk. Who is to say that today's white-collar piddle refusenik may not be blackballed as yesteryear's blue-collar labor union man was?

WHEN cocaine was an upper-income, if not exclusively an upper-class, pleasure, Peter Ueberroth was not demonstrating how business power could be used to discourage the national nostril from sniffing up the white-line powder trail. As long as cocaine was the pastime of rock stars, people with trust funds, Studio 54 fauna, and hipper, upper-level political operatives, there was no substance-abuse emergency in the country, certainly not one so acute that every major corporate entity had to be mobilized against it. But the lower orders ape their betters, and nowhere more so than in our egalitarian democracy. The whole country has gotten a white powder dusting.

Fearful that a cocaine-snorting, law-breaking labor force may be antithetical to hard work, respect for authority, and civic order, the upper tiers have thrown themselves into a campaign of social coercion. Since the law-enforcement apparatus has been rusted out by bribery, leaving the people in the cocaine business immune from arrest, the attempt is now being made to mobilize the largest and most powerful institutions, both legal and economic, to frighten millions out of buying the stuff. Enter Peter Ueberroth. Though he is not the sole business executive to use economic power to scare employees away from purchasing cocaine, he is, by virtue of professional baseball's high visibility, the most conspicuous one.

If Ueberroth is successful in suppressing drug use among the hoi polloi, he will have purified America's wee-wee at no inconsiderable cost. An already un-

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comfortably obsequious population will have been cowed yet one more time. Corporate America's power over individuals' private lives will have been augmented. Lastly, the double standard of permissible conduct that has been a hallmark of the Reagan reign will have been extended, and we may already have had more than enough of that. As it is, homosexuals in the armed forces and elsewhere in government are filtered out even as much richer and more highly placed homosexuals are entertained at the White House. The application of the double standard as to who pays taxes and who doesn't needs no amplification. Now add to that a two-track system of social coercion whereby the powerful remain fully clothed while the members of the great unwashed must strip naked at the office manager's command for intimate inspection.

Perhaps in the present evolution of things we ought to think less of civil liberties and concentrate instead on social liberty. But in any event we have Peter Ueberroth to thank for leading us into places Americans have never been before.

NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 5*

ultimate direction of that policy. If for negotiations, genuine and sincere, the Administration will gain support from much of the democratic center. If for military victory, then we join with others in saying no."

Two-and-a-half years later, negotiations have yet to be seriously tried, military victory has become the express goal of administration policy, and THE NEW REPUBLIC is saying yes. Despite the dissents of TRB and Jefferson Morley, the magazine recommends fomenting a proxy war it admits would be "of necessity nasty, brutish, and long." And if the proxies cannot win? TNR's answer is that "American military involvement can never be ruled out." Such "involvement" would be catastrophic for many reasons, but there is no sign the American people would support it. The most likely outcome of the administration's policy, then, is military retreat and strategic failure—failure that the administration is already preemptively blaming upon those who have been warning it all along against the consequences of its folly. As contributing editors of THE NEW REPUBLIC, we remain committed to continuing discussion of this issue in its pages. But as for the bankrupt policy the magazine editorially endorses, "we join with others in saying no."

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG, ROBERT COLES, HENRY FAIRLIE, HENDRIK HERTZBERG, VINT LAWRENCE, R.W.B. LEWIS, MARK CRISPIN MILLER, ROBERT B. REICH, RONALD STEEL, RICHARD L. STROUT, ANNE TYLER, MICHAEL WALZER, C. VANN WOODWARD
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

TNR's editorial does not merely argue for aid to the *contras*. It also argues for direct U.S. intervention should the *contras* fail. What else is one to conclude from your statement that "a democratic Nicaragua is the only guarantee that the [Soviet] threat will not materialize"? If I believed that Nicaragua, with its present leadership, is ". . . bound to be a source of constant instability in a region of weak and fledgling democracies . . . ," I should think that more than $100 million is required. Does TNR favor U.S. military intervention should the *contras* fail? Let us know. And please don't tell us that financing the *contras* is the best way to avoid U.S. military intervention.

ANTHONY J. BARBERA
Baltimore, Maryland

To the editors:

For sheer sophistry, your piece "The Case for the Contras" wins the George Shultz Award for 1986. Congratulations! I expect to see Patrick Buchanan's name on your masthead when he gets canned by the White House.

I feel very sad about this. I have subscribed to THE NEW REPUBLIC for nearly 50 years. I have seen it through many changes, both philosophically and physically, but it was always, I thought, published in the name of decency and humanity. I have supported TNR when it desperately needed reader help. I read it in my tank during World War II and when I traveled to places such as Niger, Mali, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. I wrote for it in the 1950s.

No more. I'll be damned if I'm going to support anyone or any publication that thinks of sending young Americans—whether they are Latin or North American—to die in Nicaragua.

My subscription runs out in a couple of months. For the first time in a half century, I will not renew.

JERRY E. ROSENTHAL
Naples, Florida

TRB, *from page 6*

possibly know about investment banking? The question, though, isn't what she knows but who she knows in city and state governments. Likewise Ivanhoe Donaldson, former deputy mayor of D.C. He recently pleaded guilty of outright graft. But if he'd been slightly less greedy, he would still be leading a lucrative life as a vice president of E. F. Hutton. Walter Mondale's former campaign manager, Jim Johnson, is now a vice president of Shearson Lehman Brothers—valued, it's said, for his political contacts among Democratic governors.

Campaign contributions are also not illegal. The *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* reported in February that Mayor Tom Bradley had raised $100,000 for his governor's race from the "New York Bradley Roundtable," composed largely of firms that had handled $2.5 million in Los Angeles municipal bonds.

When a racket gets completely out of hand like this, reform efforts usually take the form of curbing "abuses." In recent years Congress has tried capping the amount of nongovernment bonds any jurisdiction can offer; forbidding the use of tax-free bonds for specific businesses such as suntan parlors; and writing formulas to direct the benefit of housing bonds toward low-income people. Each of these reforms has made the law more complex, further enriching the lawyers who maneuver around them (often taking the precaution of lobbying loopholes into the reforms before they're enacted). No reform has slowed the hemorrhaging of federal tax revenues, and none has addressed the reality that the whole system is an abuse.

Reagan's tax-reform proposal would have cut through all the talk of "abuses" by simply forbidding future tax-free bonds for nongovernment purposes. The House tax bill returns us to the world of "caps" and complex formulas. Reagan's proposal would save the government an estimated $17 billion over five years, the House bill barely three billion dollars.

Municipal bonds are a paradigm of the central flaw in pluralist democracy. On one side of the debate is a rich variety of narrow interests that have bought into current arrangements. On the other side, protecting the general interest, is a wan brigade of green-eyeshade types, we unhappy few, ineffectually waving our pocket calculators and whining about revenue loss. Not surprisingly, the prospect is for further "compromise" in the Senate.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Slapstick

THE VOTING ON AID to the *contras* may be what's preoccupying readers and writers of these pages lately, but *le tout* Washington has been buzzing about something else: at an embassy dinner for the prime minister of Canada the other night, the Canadian ambassador's wife, Sondra Gotlieb, slapped her social secretary, Connie Gibson Connor, in the face. Ms. Gotlieb lost her temper because Richard Darman, the deputy secretary of the Treasury and mysteriously a favorite of Washington hostesses, canceled at the last minute. As a consequence, Ms. Connor got whacked on the cheek hard enough to lose an earring. She went running off into the night—but came back a few minutes later to smile a lot with Ms. Gotlieb. "The social world closed ranks around the ambassador's wife," reported the *Washington Post*. "I think we just don't talk about it," said Susan Mary Alsop, the Georgetown dowager and author. "She's such an important and marvelous friend. Nobody in Washington is going to fuss about it." But they did fuss. And even though they told the *Post* that they sympathized with Sondra ("I think there is a tremendous pressure to constantly be on stage," said one), secretly (and unsecretly) many of them felt the way I did, taking a certain pleasure in her misery. Ms. Gotlieb has for some time now occupied a spot about halfway down a list of mine that's headed "These People Must Be Stopped." Near the top, of course, are Lee Iacocca, John Kerry, and Andy Rooney.

FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS, Sondra Gotlieb has been playing to the hilt the role of bemused outsider in Washington. She writes an Op-Ed column for the *Post* that consists of fictitious letters to a friend back home in Canada. This is one of those ideas that sounds good in the beginning—a sort of column *à clef*—but it has degenerated into self-parody. In case anyone misses the point, Ms. Gotlieb has subtitled her new book, a collection of her columns, "An Irreverent Account of Life in Powertown." She is a self-styled Eccentric Washington Woman. Unfortunately, this is a species that often comes to a bad end. Look what happened to Martha Mitchell. But the moral of the slapping incident is that Ms. Gotlieb is not the eccentric or bemused outsider at all: like almost everyone on the politico-social circuit here, what makes her most anxious are such concerns as which important people (Dick Darman!) are going to show up at her dinner parties.

BUT THE WIFE of the Canadian ambassador does have some insights into Washington. One of them can be found in the title of her book: *Wife of . . .* Her point is that in Washington "married women are identified as wives of important jobs or countries." Actually, this observation is less true today than it used to be. More important is the general rule: in Washington you are what you do. Which means that you are the institution you're connected to. And woe to the person who's unconnected. "Wife of" is one of the consequences. It says that the institution you're connected to is your husband. In most other cities, matters of vocation seem far less important than they do here. When I lived in New Orleans, for instance, to ask the question "What do you do?" of someone you'd just met at a cocktail party was considered a serious social gaffe. There the concern was genealogy, and the most frequent question asked of me, as an outsider, was "What's your wife's maiden name?" In Washington, women who stay home to raise their kids have a particularly tough time. The vocational question is put to them delicately: "Do you, uh, work at home?" The clear implication is that this woman ought to be out in the real world, in an office on K Street doing something important, like finding loopholes in the latest FTC regulations.

LATELY THE what-do-you-do question has thrown me into confusion, since, in my case, it now requires a complicated answer rather than a simple institutional connection. What I do these days is write for a few publications, including this one, and consult. I'm also working on a book, but that's a tortuous tale as well. I've been looking for ways to answer the what-do-you-do question quickly, in a way that steers the conversation in a more promising direction. One way is to state outright that I work for the CIA. Another is to say that I work for a huge law firm: "Me? I'm at Covington & Burling." I tried this recently after running into an old college classmate famous in 1969 for leading the charge into the administration building during a celebrated takeover. It turned out that *he* worked for Covington & Burling. But the fact that he'd never met me there didn't faze him a bit. It's a big place.

WHEN I LEFT my job as publisher of THE NEW REPUBLIC two years ago, I was given, in lieu of a gold watch, the honorific "contributing editor." Contributing editors don't edit, and most of them don't do much contributing either. At most magazines, they're on the masthead either to lend class to the publication or for the publication to lend class to them (as is the case, naturally, at TNR). Few magazines pay their contributing editors other than for what they write. A C.E. is strictly vestigial. So you can imagine my pleasure a few weeks ago when Rick Hertzberg called me, in my capacity as a C.E., to ask if I would sign the letter that appears on page five of this issue. At last, a role for a contributing editor! As you can see, I didn't sign, but I'm hoping for other opportunities. Maybe at the end of each lead editorial, THE NEW REPUBLIC can run, in parentheses, the tally among contributing editors: "Eight C.E.s agreed with this editorial, seven opposed it, and one was found to have died in 1982." This new C.E. power can be heady stuff. Some of us are thinking of setting up the American Society of Contributing Editors. We'll lobby for annual stipends and medical benefits, maybe even professional certification. We'll hold our annual convention in Bermuda and play golf. In fact, the new elevation of C.E.-dom could be the answer to my cocktail party problem: "What do you do?" "Oh, I'm a contributing editor to THE NEW REPUBLIC." A real job! Status! Attention, Sondra Gotlieb: invite a few C.E.s to your next dinner party. Unlike deputy treasury secretaries, we show up.

J.K.G.

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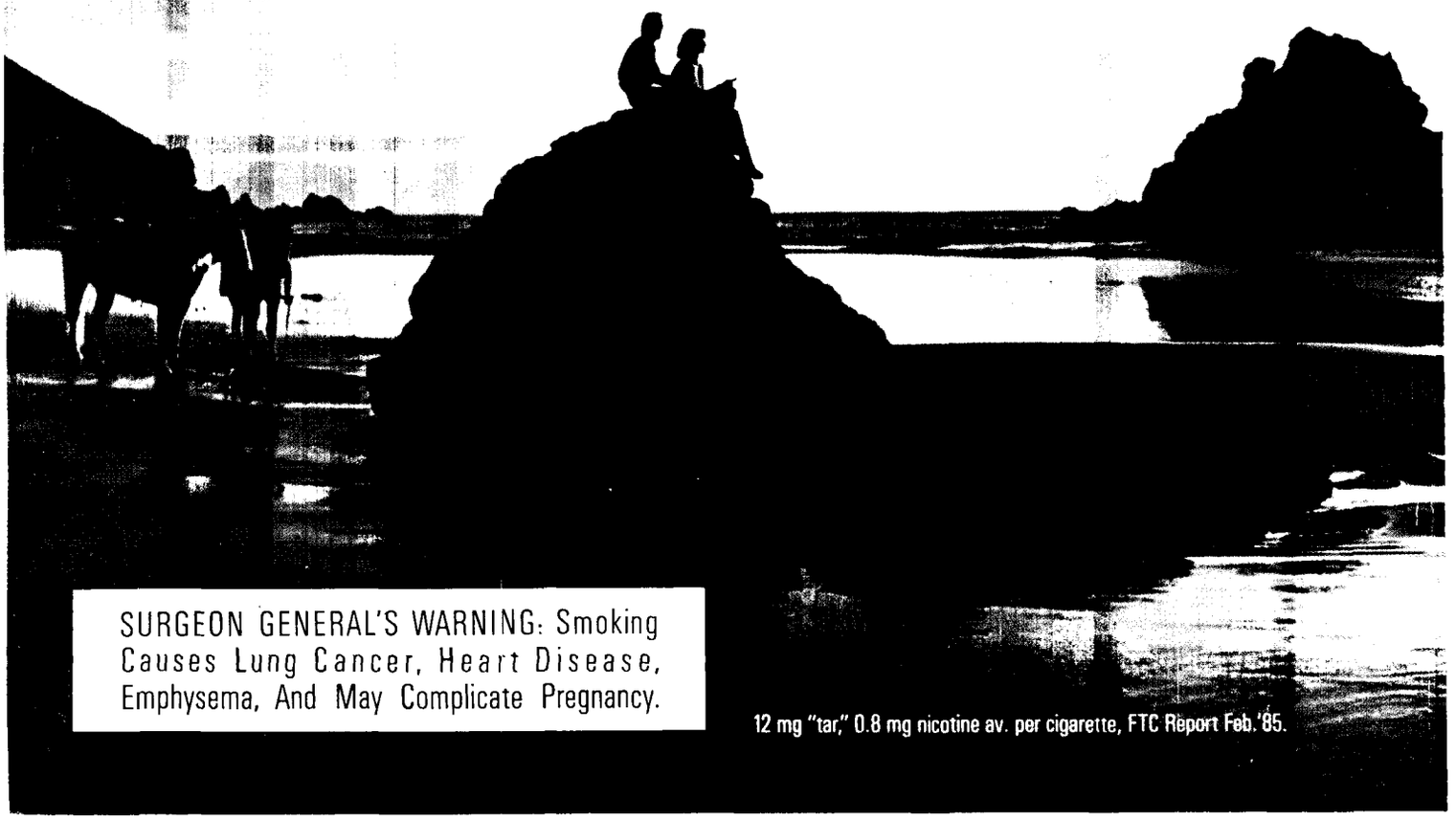

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